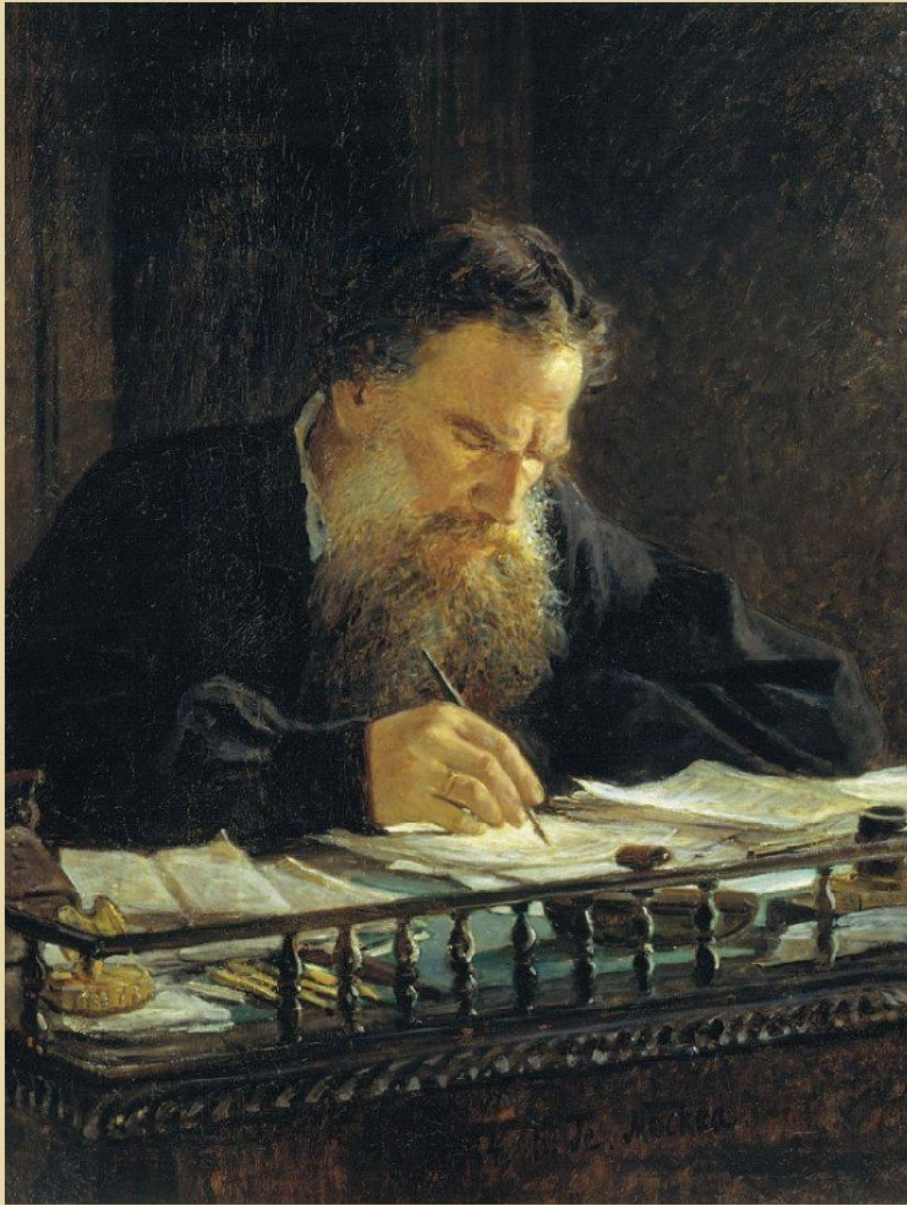


# Christian Teaching



Lev Tolstoy

# The Christian Teaching

*By Lev Tolstoy*

# Introduction

I have lived until the age of fifty, thinking that that the life of a human, which occupies the time between his birth and death, is all his life; and that therefore the goal of a human is his happiness in this mortal life. So I tried to find this happiness. But the longer I lived, the more evident it became to me that this happiness does not and cannot exist. That happiness which I was looking for I could not reach, yet that one which I gained, immediately ceased to be happiness.

More and more misfortunes have happened, and the inevitability of death became more and more obvious to me. And I understood that after this meaningless and unhappy life, nothing waits for me but suffering, illness, old age and annihilation. I asked myself, 'What is this for?' but did not receive an answer. I despaired.

What some people told me, and of what I sometimes tried to convince myself, namely, that I must wish for happiness not for myself alone but for others, for closed ones and for all people, — that did not satisfy me because, firstly, I could not sincerely wish for happiness for others as much as I do for myself; secondly, and chiefly, because others, just like myself, were also doomed to unhappiness and death. And therefore all my efforts toward their happiness were futile.

I despaired. But then I thought that my despair might be caused by the fact that I'm different, and that other people know what they live for and therefore they do not despair. So I began to observe other people; but they, like myself, did not know what they lived for. Some tried to silence their ignorance in the aimless round of life; some reassured themselves and others that they believed in various religions they were indoctrinated with since childhood, although it was impossible to believe in what they believed, it was so foolish. And many of them, as it seemed to me, only pretended they believed, but deep down they did not believe.

I could no longer continue to hustle and bustle, for no hustle could hide the

question always open in front of me. And I could not start again believing the religion which I was taught in my childhood, which, once I have matured in mind, has left me by itself. But the more I learned, the more I grew convinced that in this religion there could not be possibly truth, that there is only hypocrisy and selfish aims of the deceivers, and the weakness of mind, stubbornness and the fear of the deceived. Not to mention the inner contradictions of this teaching, — its meanness, its brutality in professing God punishing people with eternal torments. (All these contradictions, absurdities and cruelties I exposed in detail in my work, *The Criticism of Dogmatic Theology*, where all the Church dogmas and theses, as taught in our theology, are examined in sequence.) The main thing that did not let me believe in this doctrine was knowledge that beside the Orthodox Christian teaching, asserting itself being the only true one, there existed the second teaching of Christianity — the Roman Catholic; the third — the Lutheran; the fourth — the Dissent, and all the various Christian teachings, each of which asserted itself as the only true teaching.

I also knew that beside these Christian teachings, non-Christian teachings also existed — Buddhism, Brahmanism, Mohammedanism, Confucianism, and others, also asserting themselves to be true, and all other teachings – to be erroneous.

I could neither return to religion I was taught in my childhood, nor believe any of those professed among other nations, because all of them had the same contradictions, absurdities, miracles, denial of all other religions and, most importantly, the deceit, demands for blind trust in their teaching.

So, I have convinced myself that among the existent religions I will not find an answer to my question nor ease my suffering. My despair was so great that I was on the verge of suicide.

At this point, the salvation came. From childhood I had retained a vague idea that the Gospel has the answer to my question. In this teaching, in the Gospel, despite of all the perversions which it has been subjected to in the doctrine of the Christian Church, I felt truth. And as the last effort, after discarding all the interpretations of the Gospel teaching, I began to read the Gospels and to

penetrate their meaning. And the more I penetrated the meaning of this book, the more I grasped something new, quite different from what Christian churches teach, but answering the question of my life.

And finally, the answer became completely clear. This answer was not only clear, but unquestionable; because, firstly, it matched entirely to the requirements of my reason and heart, and secondly, when I came to understand it, I saw that this was not just my special interpretation of the Gospel (as it might appear), nor even the special revelation of Christ, but the very answer to the question of life which more or less clearly was expressed by the best people of mankind, before and after the Gospel, starting from Moses, Isaiah, Confucius, ancient Greeks, Buddha, Socrates, up to Pascal, Spinoza, Fichte, Feuerbach and all those, often unnoticed and not famous people, who sincerely, instead of just believing the teachings, thought and spoke about the meaning of life. So, in this understanding of truth I discovered from the Gospel, I not only was not alone, but I was together with all the best people of the past and of our time. I became confirmed in this truth, and at peace, and after that lived happily 20 years of my life, and now with gladness approach death.

And this answer to the meaning of my life, which gave me complete comfort and joy of life, I want to pass to people. I am with one foot in grave, due to my age and health condition, and therefore worldly considerations have no meaning to me. Even if they had, I know that this explanation of my beliefs will not contribute to my worldly welfare nor people's kind attitude toward me, but, on the contrary, may only disturb and upset both unbelievers who demand from me fictional work rather than pondering over faith, and believers who are enraged at my religious writings and blame me for them. In addition, most likely, this writing will become known to people only after my death. And so what prompts me to do what I'm doing is not greed, not fame, not worldly considerations, but only the fear of not fulfilling of what He, who sent me into this world and to Whom I am waiting for my return at any hour, wants from me.

I therefore ask all those who will read this: read and understand my writing, putting aside, as I did, all worldly considerations, and bearing in mind only

the eternal source of truth and goodness by the will of which we came into this world, and very soon, as corporeal creatures, will vanish from it; and, without haste and irritation, understand and discuss what I say; and, in case of disagreement, correct me not with contempt and hatred but with empathy and love; and in case you agree with me, remember that if I tell truth, this truth is not mine but of God, and it's just accidentally part of it goes through me, just as it goes through each and every one of us when we know truth and transfer it to others.

## Part 1. Ancient teachings and Christian understanding of life

# 1. Ancient teachings

1. People always, from the earliest times, have felt the misery, instability, and meaningless of their existence, and looked for salvation from the misery, instability, and meaningless in belief in God or Gods who would rescue them from various calamities in this and after life and give them the well-being they desired yet couldn't obtain in this life.

2. Therefore, from the ancient times among different nations there were different preachers who taught people about what the God or Gods are who can save people, and about what they need to do to please the God or Gods in order to get the reward in this or future life.

3. Some religious teachings taught that God is the Sun personified in various animals; others taught that Gods are the Heaven and Earth; the third ones taught that God has created the world and chosen a favorite nation from all; the fourth ones taught that there are many gods and that they participate in the affairs of people; the fifth ones taught that God, by adopting the image of man, came down to Earth. And all these teachers, by mixing truth with deceptions, demanded from people not only abstinence from the actions regarded as evil and performance of actions regarded as good, but also sacraments, sacrifices, and prayers, which were, more than anything else, supposed to provide people with their well-being in this world and in the future.



## 2. The inadequacy of the ancient teachings

1. But the longer people lived the less these teachings satisfied the demands of human soul.

2. Firstly, people saw that happiness in this world, to which they were driven to, was not attained, despite the fulfilment of the requirements of God or gods.

3. Secondly, with the spread of education, the credibility of what religious teachers preached about God - about the future life and its rewards, not corresponding to the modern learned notions of the world - weakened and weakened.

4. Thirdly and chiefly, people's confidence in these various teachings weakened because the people, through getting into closer relationship with each other, learned that religious teachers in every country preach their own peculiar doctrine as the only true one and deny all others. And people, after discovering this, naturally concluded that none of these teachings was truer than another, and therefore that none of them can be accepted as indisputable and infallible truth.

### 3. The necessity of a new teaching suitable to the degree of enlightenment of mankind

1. Unattainability of happiness in this life, the growing enlightenment of humanity, and the relationships of the people between each other as a result of which they came to know the religious teachings of other nations, caused people's confidence in the doctrines they were preached to become weaker and weaker.

2. Meanwhile, the need for an explanation of the meaning of life and resolving the contradiction between the pursuit of happiness and life, on one hand, and the increasingly clear awareness of the inevitability of disaster and death, on the other hand, became more and more pressing.

3. A person desires the well-being of himself, he sees the meaning of his life in it; but the longer he lives the clearer he sees that this well-being is not possible for him. The person desires life, and the continuation of life, but sees that he and all that exists around him are doomed to inevitable destruction and disappearance. Human possesses logic and seeks a reasonable explanation of the phenomena of life, but finds no rational explanation either of his own or anyone else's life.

4. If in ancient times the understanding of this contradiction between the desire for human life that demands for well-being and its continuation and the inevitability of death and suffering was accessible only to the best minds, like Solomon, Buddha, Socrates, Laozi and others, then in the recent time it became truth available to all; and therefore the solution of this contradiction became necessary more than ever.

5. And exactly at that time when the need to solve the contradiction between the pursuit of happiness and life, together with the realization that they are unattainable, had become so painfully essential to humanity, the solution was given to people in Christian teaching, in its true meaning.

#### 4. What is the solution of the contradiction of life, and the explanation of its meaning, given by Christian teaching in its true meaning?

1. Ancient teachings, by their assertions of the existence of God as a creator, preserver, and redeemer, tried to mask the contradiction of human life; but Christian teaching, by contrast, shows people this contradiction in all its power, shows them that it must take place, and, out of the acknowledgment of this contradiction, derives the solution. This contradiction is as follows.

2. On one hand, a human is indeed an animal and cannot cease to be an animal while he dwells in the body; on the other hand, he is a spiritual being denying all the animal demands of a human.

3. During the first period of his life, a human lives without comprehending that he lives; so he lives not by himself, but what lives through him is that force of life that lives in everything we know.

4. A human begins to live by himself only when he becomes conscious about that he lives. And he is conscious about that he lives when he knows that he desires for the well-being of himself and that the other beings have the same desires. Reason awakened in him gives him this knowledge.

5. Having found out that he lives and desires for the well-being of himself and that the other beings have the same desires, the human also inevitably discovers that the well-being he desires for his own separate being is unattainable; and that, instead of the well-being he desires, he has to face inevitable suffering and death. The same awaits all other beings. And there a contradiction emerges, which human tries to resolve so that his life as it is would have a reasonable meaning. He wants his life to continue to be as it was before the awakening of his reason, i.e. entirely animal, or else that it should be purely spiritual.

6. The person desires to be either a beast or an angel, but he can be neither

one nor the other.

7. And here it comes the solution to this contradiction that Christian teaching provides. It tells the person that he is neither a beast nor an angel but an angel being born of the beast — a spiritual being born out of the animal one. And that all our existence in this world is nothing else but this process of birth.

## 5. What constitutes the birth of spiritual being?

1. As soon as a person wakes up to conscience awareness, this consciousness tells him that he desires well-being; and as his conscience awareness is awakened in his separate being, it seems to him that his desire for well-being is meant for his separate being.
2. But that same conscience awareness, which showed him himself as a separate being desiring blessing for himself, also shows him that this separate being is inadequate for that desire for well-being and life which he attributes to that desire. He sees that this separate being can have neither well-being nor life on its own.
3. "Then what does have true life?" - He asks himself and sees that true life is neither in himself nor in those beings that surround him but only in that which desires well-being.
4. And having discovered this, the person no longer regards himself as a carnal and mortal being isolated from others, but regards himself as that being (inseparable from others, spiritual, and therefore not mortal) which is revealed to him by his conscience awareness.

This constitutes the birth of new spiritual being in a human.

## 6. What is that being that is getting born in human?

1. The being, which was revealed to the human by his conscience awareness, is the desire for happiness, is that same desire for happiness which earlier constituted the purpose of his life, with the difference that the desire for happiness of his former self related to one separate physical being and was not conscious of itself; whereas the present desire for well-being is conscious of itself and relates not to anything separate but to all that exists.

2. In the first period of the awakening of reason, it seemed to the human that the desire for well-being, which he recognises as his real self, relates only to that body in which it is enclosed.

3. But the clearer and firmer his reason becomes, the clearer it appears, as soon as the person becomes conscious of himself, that his true self is not his body (which is devoid of true life) but the desire for well-being by itself - in other words, the desire of well-being of all existing.

4. The desire of well-being of all existing is what gives life to all that exists, is what we call God.

5. The being which is revealed to a person by his consciousness, the being that is getting born, - is what gives life to all that exists, - is God.

## 7. God, according to Christian teaching, recognized by a human within himself

1. According to old teachings, in order to know God, a human had to believe what other people told him about God: how God has allegedly created the world and people, and then revealed Himself to them; whereas, according to Christian teaching, a human recognises God directly within himself through his own consciousness.

2. Consciousness reveals to the human that the essence of his life is in the desire of well-being of all existing, something inexplicable and inexpressible in words, and, at the same time, the closest and most understandable to a human.

3. The initial desire for well-being appears in a human as the life of his separate animal being; then - as the life of those beings he loves; then, and after his conscious awareness gets awakened in him it manifests as the desire of well-being of all existing. And this desire of the well-being of all existing is the source of every life, is God; as it is said in the Gospel that God is love.

## 8. God, according to the Christian teaching, recognized by a human outside himself

1. But beside God which is recognized, according to Christian teaching, within himself as the desire of well-being of all existing – love, - a human, also according to Christian teaching, acknowledges it outside himself, - in all that exists.

2. Being aware in his separate body of that spiritual and inseparable being of God, and seeing the presence of the same God in everything alive, a human cannot but ask himself: why God, spiritual being, one and indivisible, has enclosed himself in the separate bodies of beings, and in the separate body of a human.

3. Why would spiritual and whole being divide itself? What for the divine essence is confined in the conditions of separateness and physicality? Why is the immortal enclosed in the mortal, and bound up with it?

4. There can be only one answer: there is higher will, the motives of which are unattainable to a human. And this higher will has placed a human, and all existing, in this position. This same cause, for some reason incomprehensible to a person, enclosed itself, the desire of well-being of all existing – love, - in beings separate from the rest of the world, — is that same God which human recognizes within himself, also recognizable outside himself. So God, according to the Christian teaching, is that essence of life which a human recognizes both within himself and in the whole world as the desire for well-being, and at the same time, is the cause by which this essence is enclosed in the conditions of an individual bodily life.

God, according to the Christian teaching, is the father who, as we are told in the Gospel, has sent into the world his son alike himself, for the fulfillment of His Will in him, - the well-being of everything existing.



## 9. Confirmation of truth of the Christian understanding of life by the outward manifestation of God.

1. God is manifested in a reasonable human as the desire of well-being of all existing - in separate beings, each of whom is aspired to each own well-being.

2. Although it is not known and cannot be known to a human why it was necessary for the complete spiritual being, God, to manifest Himself in a human as the desire of well-being of all existing, and in separate beings - as the desire for each own well-being, a human cannot but see that both of them converge toward one close, definite, attainable and joyful to a person purpose.

3. This purpose is revealed to a person by observation, by scripture, and by reasoning. Observation shows him that all progress in human life (as far as it is known to us) has consisted only in the fact that people and other living beings, previously separated and hostile to one another, are becoming more and more connected and tie together by consent and cooperation. The scripture shows the human, what all wise men of the world have taught, that humanity must move from division to unity; as a prophet said that all people must be taught by God and spears and swords be beaten into sickles and ploughs; and, as Christ said that all should be one like 'I am one with the Father'. Reasoning shows the person that that the greatest well-being of people, to which all people aspire, can be obtained only by the most union and concord among people.

4. Therefore, although the ultimate purpose of the world's existence is hidden from a human, he nevertheless knows what constitutes the immediate work of the world's development, in which he is called to participate; this work is the replacement of division and discord in the world with union and harmony.

5. Observation, scripture, and reason show the human that this is the essence of the work of God, in which he is called to participate, and the inner urge of that spiritual being, which is in getting born within himself – love - leads him

in the same direction.

6. The inner urge of the spiritual essence, being born in a person, consists solely in the increase of love within himself. And this increase of love is that what drives the work being committed in the world: the replacement of division and discord with union and harmony, — that what Christian teaching calls the establishment of the kingdom of God.

7. So, if a person has any doubts in truthfulness of the Christian definition of the meaning of life, the concurrence of human's inner aspirations with the course of life of the world would confirm its truthfulness.

## 10. What is life in this world as revealed to a human by Christian teaching

1. When a person is getting born to new life, he realizes that in his separate from others being is enclosed the desire for well-being not only of himself but of all that exists, - love.
2. If this desire for the well-being of all existing, this love, was not enclosed in a separate being, it would not know about itself and would always remain equal to itself; but being placed in the limits of a separate being — human, — it is aware of itself and its limits, and tends to break what binds it.
3. By its nature, love, the desire for well-being, tends to embrace all that exists. Naturally, it expands its limits by love at first to one's own family — wife, children, then to friends, then to one's fellows, countrymen; but love does not get satisfied with this and seeks to embrace everything existing.
4. In this incessant expansion of the limits of love, which constitutes the essence of the birth of spiritual being, is the essence of true human life in this world. The whole existence of a human in this world, from birth till death, is nothing but the birth of spiritual being in him. This this incessant birth is what in Christian teaching is called the true life.
6. It is possible to imagine that what composes our body, which currently appears as a separate being and which we love in preference to all other beings, sometime in the past, lower, life was only a collection of beloved objects that love has united into one, so that in this life we already feel it to be ourselves; in the same way, our present love to what is feasible to us will in the future life comprise one whole being, which will be intimate to us just as our body is now. ("In my Father's house are many abiding places.")

## 11. How does true life revealed by Christian teaching differs from the former life?

1. The difference between personal life and true life is this: personal life aims to increase the enjoyment of outer life and to prolong it; and this goal, despite all the efforts, is never attained, because human has no control over external conditions that hinder the enjoyment, nor over all sorts of disasters that may at any time hit him. Whereas the purpose of the true life, which consists in expanding and intensifying of love, cannot be hindered by anything because all external causes such as violence, illness, suffering, which hinder the achievement of the goals of the personal life, contribute to the achievement of the spiritual purpose.

2. This difference is similar to the difference between those workers who were sent to the master's Garden, as it was told in the Gospel's parable, and decided that the garden belongs to them and so they withheld fruits from their master, and those who recognize themselves as his workers and perform what was assigned by their master.

## Part 2. Sins

## 12. What prevents a person from living true life?

1. In order to fulfill his destiny, human must increase love within himself and manifest it in the world; and this increase and manifestation of love in the world is what is necessary to accomplish the work of God. But what a human can do to manifest love?

2. The foundation of a person's true life is the desire for the well-being of all existing. Love in a person is enclosed within the limits of a separate being, and therefore it is naturally tends to expand those limits; so a person does not need to do anything to manifest love, it strives for its own manifestation; a person only needs to remove obstacles to its progression. What are these obstacles?

3. The obstacles that make it difficult for a person to manifest love are in the human body, in his separateness from other beings: in the fact that a person, beginning his life from infancy during which he lives only animal life of a separate being, even later on, when reason is already awakening in him, cannot completely get away from striving to benefit his separate being, and so he commits acts opposite to love.

## 13. Implication of obstacles to the manifestation of love

1. The desire for the well-being of all existing, love, in its strive toward its manifestation, encounters obstacles to this manifestation in the human body, and particularly because the human reason, which sets the love free, awakens in the person not at the time of his appearance in this world, but after certain time, when he has already grown the habits of animal life. Why is this?

2. A person cannot but ask himself this question: Why a spiritual being – love - is enclosed within a separate being of a human? And different teachings answer this question differently. Some, the pessimistic, respond that the enclosure of spiritual being within human body is a mistake which must be corrected by the destruction of the body, destruction of animal life. Other teachings say that the assumption of the existence of spiritual being is a mistake that must be corrected by the acknowledgment only of the existence of the body and its laws. Neither of these views resolves the contradiction, they just deny the legitimacy: the first one - of the body, the second - of the spirit. Only the Christian teaching resolves it.

3. To the suggestion of the tempter that Christ should destroy his life if he must not, at his will, satisfy all the demands of the animal nature, Christ answers that one must not resist the will of God, who has sent us into life as separate beings, but that in this life of separate being we must serve God alone.

4. According to Christian teaching, to resolve the contradiction of life, one should neither to destroy the life of the separate being, which would be contrary to the will of God who has sent it, nor to submit to the demands of the animal life of the separate being, which would be contrary to the spiritual source that constitutes the true self of a human, but to serve God alone in that body which contains the true self of a human.

5. The true self of a human is infinite love, living in him and constantly striving to increase, which constitutes the essence of his life. This love is

enclosed within the limits of animal life of a separate being, and tends to constantly liberate itself from this being.

6. This liberation of the spiritual being from animal individuality, this birth of spiritual being, is the true life of each individual and of all humanity.

7. Love in every one and in all mankind is like steam confined in a boiler: the steam expands, pushes the pistons and produces work. As for the steam to produce its work it needs the resistance of walls, similarly for love to produce its work it needs the resistance of the limits of separate being in which it is enclosed.



## 14. What a human must not do, to live true life?

1. A person, during his infancy, childhood, and sometimes even later, lives like an animal, fulfilling the will of God which he perceives as the desire to benefit his own separate being; and he knows no other life.
2. Having awakened to conscious awareness, the person, although knows that his true life is in his spiritual being, continues to feel himself in a separate body, and, out of the learned habits of animal life, commits acts contrary to love and intended to benefit his separate being.
3. By doing so, the person deprives himself of the benefits of true life and does not attain the goal of benefiting his separate being to which he aspires, and therefore, by doing so he commits sins. These sins constitute the inborn obstacles to the manifestation of love in people.
4. The obstacles are even bigger because former generations, having committed sins, pass the habits and practices of their sins onto the next generations.
5. So every person – because of both factors: having acquired since childhood the habit of living for his separate being, and also because the same habits of living for oneself passed down to him by his ancestors, - is always affected by sins, which inhibit his manifestation of love.

## 15. Three origins of sins

1. There are three origins of sins that get in the way of love.

a) Sins that result from the ineradicable tendency of a human, while he lives in the body, toward benefiting himself — innate, natural sins.

(b) Sins that result from the traditions of human institutions and practices aimed at increasing the benefits of individuals - inherited, societal sins.

(c) Sins that result from the aspirations of an individual toward the greater and greater benefiting of his separate being – personal, or devised, sins.

2. The essence of innate sins is that people believe that their well-being is in preserving and increasing of the animal well-being of separate entity. Any activity aimed at increasing the animal benefits of one's personality is an innate sin.

3. Inherited sins are those that people commit using existing, established by people who lived before them, approaches of increasing the well-being of an individual. Any use of institutions and practices established for benefiting of one's personality is an inherited sin.

4. Personal, or devised, sins are those sins which people commit when, in addition to the inherited practices, they invent new means of increasing the well-being of each separate self. Any human invention of the new means of increasing the benefits of a separate being is a personal sin.

## 16. The classification of sins

1. There are six sins that stand on the way of manifesting love in people:

i. The sin of sensual lust, which consists in arranging for oneself sensual pleasures derived from the satisfaction of one's needs.

ii. The sin of idleness, which consists in freeing oneself from the labour necessary to meet one's needs.

iii. The sin of greed, which consists in acquiring for oneself opportunities for the satisfaction of one's needs in the future.

iv. The sin of lust for power, which consists in subjugating the ones alike oneself.

v. The sin of sexual lust, which consists in arranging pleasures for oneself to satisfy sexual lust.

vi. The sin of intoxication, which consists in producing unnatural arousal of one's physical and mental faculties.

## 17. Sin of sensual lust

1. A human has to meet his bodily needs, and in the unconscious state he, like any other animal, satisfies them, neither refraining and nor adding to them, and in this satisfaction of needs he finds his well-being.
2. But, upon awakening to conscious awareness, it seems to the person that the well-being of his separate individual comes down to the satisfaction of his needs, and he devises the means of increasing pleasures from the satisfaction of his needs. He tries to keep the means of pleasurable satisfaction of needs devised by his predecessors, and by himself invents new, even more pleasurable, means of gratification. This constitutes the sin of sensual lust.
3. When a person eats or drinks before getting hungry, when he dresses not to protect his body from cold, when he builds a house not to shelter himself from weather but to increase the pleasures of satisfying his needs, he commits the innate sin of lust.
4. When a person was born and raised in the habits of excesses in drink, food, clothing, housing, and continues to exploit this superfluity in his life while maintaining these habits, then such a person commits the inherited sin of lust.
5. When a person, already living in luxury, comes up with additional, not used by the people around him, more pleasant means of satisfying needs: instead of old simple food and drink introduces new, more refined; instead of former clothes, covering his body, obtains new, more fine; instead of a smaller, simple home, builds a new one, with new decorations etc. - such a person commits a personal sin of lust.
6. The sin of lust - inborn, inherited, or personal - consists in the fact that while striving after the well-being of his own separate entity via gratification of his own needs, the person, by reinforcing these needs, impedes his birth to new spiritual life.
7. Furthermore, the person acting this way does not reach the goal he strives

for because any increase of needs reduces the chances of satisfying the lust, and weakens the pleasure itself of satisfying. The more frequently a person satisfies his hunger and the more refined food he consumes is, the less pleasure he will derive from food. The same goes in regards to the gratification of all other animal needs.

## 18. The sin of idleness

1. A human, just like an animal, needs to practice his strengths. These strengths are naturally directed toward the provisioning of the items necessary to satisfy his needs. After work purposed on this, a human, like any animal, needs rest.
2. In an unconscious state a human, just like an animal, while provisioning the items necessary for his life, alternates work with rest, and in this natural rest finds satisfaction.
3. But, upon first awakening of his reason, the human dissociates work from rest, and after finding rest more enjoyable than work, tries to reduce labor and prolong rest, coercing other people by force or trickery to serve his needs. This is the sin of idleness.
4. When a person, using the works of others, rests when he could still work, he commits the innate sin of idleness.
5. When a person was born and still lives in an environment where he exploits the work of others, being in a position where he himself has no need to work, and he supports such order of things: not working and using the works of others, then such a person commits the inherited sin of idleness.
6. When a person, having been born and continues to live among those who is used to exploit the labor of others, and invents the means to further free himself from the work he previously performed, and lays this work onto others, when a person who used to clean his own clothes now makes others to do this for him, or who used to write his own letters, or kept his own accounts, or ran his own business, compels others to do that, and uses free time for rest or recreation, then such a person commits the personal sin of idleness.
7. The fact that every human cannot do all for himself by himself, and that the division of labour often improves and facilitates work, cannot justify

liberating oneself from work in general or from heavy work in favour of light work. Every product of labor that a human enjoys requires from him certain work and neither easing of his labor nor complete liberation from it.

8. The sin of idleness, innate, inherited, or personal, consists in the fact that a person, by quitting to work himself and exploiting the labor of others, does the opposite of what he was intended for, since the true well-being is only achieved via the act of serving.

9. Besides, the person who acts so fails to obtain even the pleasures he seeks, as the pleasures of rest are attained only after labor. And the less one works, the less enjoyment he gets from rest.

## 19. The sin of greed

1. The position of a human in the universe is that his bodily existence is secured by general laws to which he is subjected like all animals. A person who yields to his instinct must work; and the sole purpose of his work is the satisfaction of his needs, and such work is always more than enough to secure his existence. A human is a social animal, and the fruits of his labor accumulate in society; so that, if only there were no sins of greed, every person unable to work would always have all the essential to meet his needs. And therefore the Gospel expression about not worrying about tomorrow and living like the birds of heaven is not a metaphor but a statement of the existing law of any animal social life. The same is said in the Quran that there is no animal in the world to which God would not give sustenance.

2. But to a human, even after his conscious awakening, it still continues to seem for long time that his life comes down to the happiness of his separate being, and as this being lives in time so he takes special care to insure the satisfaction of the future needs of himself and his family.

3. This special provisioning of his and his family needs for the future is only possible by withholding the items of consumption from other people, which is called a property. And for this acquisition, retention, and increase of the possessions a human directs his efforts. This constitutes the sin of greed.

4. When a human regards food which he has prepared or received from somebody and stored for tomorrow, or clothing, or winter shelter for himself or his family as exclusively his own, then he commits the innate sin of greed.

5. When a person of awakening consciousness finds himself in the circumstances where he regards certain objects as exclusively his own, despite the fact that they are not necessary for sustaining his life and withholds them from others, he commits the inherited sin of greed.

6. When the person, already owing the items necessary to ensure the future satisfaction of his and his family needs, and, possessing the items superfluous



to the sustainment of his life, makes new and new possessions and keeps away them from others, then this person commits the personal sin of greed.

7. The sin of greed, whether an innate, inherited, or personal, is that, in an attempt to secure future well-being of his separate self, and by obtaining for this purposes possessions and withholding them from other people, the person is doing the opposite of what he intended for: instead of serving people, he takes away from them what they need.

8. Moreover, the person acting this way never reaches the goal he seeks, because future is not in the power of a human, and a human may die at any moment. By spending certain present on unknown future that might never come, he makes an obvious mistake.

## 20. The sin of lust for power

1. A human, like an animal, is put in the conditions that any satisfaction of his needs makes him get into fight with others.
2. The animal life of a human is sustained only to the detriment of other beings. Fighting is natural property and the law of animal life. And the human living animal life, prior to his conscious awakening, finds his well-being in this fight.
3. But once the person wakes up to conscious awareness, at the first time of this awakening it seems to him that his well-being will increase if he will subjugate and conquer as many other beings as possible, and the human puts his efforts to subjugate other people and beings to himself. This constitutes the sin of lust for power.
4. When a person, to defend his individual well-being, considers fighting necessary and fights against those people and beings who want to subjugate him, then such a person commits an inborn sin of lust for power.
5. When a person was born and grew up in certain conditions of power, whether he was born the son of a king, a nobleman, a merchant, or a wealthy peasant, and, keeping this status, does not stop the fight, sometimes hidden but always necessary to maintain his position, then he commits an inherited sin of lust for power.
6. When a person, already in known constant state of fight, wants to increase his well-being and power and gets into new conflicts with humans and other beings, when he attacks a neighbor to steal his possessions, his lands, or tries through the acquisition of permits, a diploma, or a rank take higher position than it currently has, or, wishing to increase his property, gets into a fight with competitors and workers, or gets into a fight with other nations, then such a person commits a personal sin of lust for power.
7. The sin of the lust for power, whether an inborn, inherited, or personal, is

that a human, by putting his efforts toward achievement of the welfare of his separate being through fighting, does directly the opposite to what constitutes true life. Instead of increasing love within himself, i.e. eliminating obstacles that separate him from other beings, he multiplies them.

8. In addition, by getting into a fight with people and other beings, a human achieves the contrary to what he seeks. Coming into a fight, he increases the likelihood that other beings will attack him, and that instead of subjugating others, he will be subjugated by them. The more a human advances in fighting, the more tension he causes.

## 21. The sin of sexual lust

1. A human has a primal instinct for reproduction: sexual drive; and a human in the animal state, by yielding to it, by copulating, fulfills his purpose in that, and in this fulfillment of his purpose he finds his well-being.

2. But upon the awakening of consciousness, it seems to the human that the satisfaction of this desire may increase the welfare of his separate being, and he enters into sexual relationship not with the purpose of procreation but for personal satisfaction. This constitutes the sin of sexual lust.

3. The sin of sexual lust is different from all other sins: while the complete abstinence from other innate sins is impossible and only their reduction is attainable, the complete abstinence from sexual sin is doable. This is because the total abstinence from satisfying personal needs (food, clothing, shelter) destroys that same individual, the same as with the lack of any rest, any property, and any drive; but the abstinence from satisfying sexual desire, the chastity - of one, several, or many people - does not end the human race, which sexual drive is supposed to maintain, because the abstinence of one, several, or many people from sexual relationship does not cause the downfall of the human race. So the satisfaction of sexual needs is not necessary for every human: each individual is given a choice of abstaining from it.

4. It is like each person is given a choice of two ways of serving God: either, by staying free of married life and its consequences, to fulfill by his own life in this world everything that God has assigned a human to fulfill, or, by realizing his powerlessness, to transfer a portion of this task or at least the possibility of accomplishing the unfulfilled task to his born, nourished, brought up offspring.

5. Because of the distinction of sexual drive from other needs, there are two different degrees of sexual sin, depending on which of the two directions a person chooses.

6. In the first direction, when a human wants, by remaining chaste, to devote

all his efforts to serving God, then any sexual intercourse will be considered the sin of sexual lust, even aimed at the birth and upbringing children, the most pure and faithful marriage will be an innate sin for a person who has chosen the way of chastity.

7. For such a person, any continuation of the sexual intercourse with the purpose of giving birth and upbringing children, even within marriage, will be an inherited sexual sin; and the liberation from this inherited sin for such a person will be the cessation of sexual relationship.

8. A personal, or devised, sin for such a person will become getting into a sexual relationship with a person other than to whom he is already married.

9. For a person who has chosen the way of serving God by means of procreation, an inborn sin will be considered any sexual intercourse without the aim of procreating, as is happens in cases of prostitution, random affairs, and with the marriages of convenience, of profit, of amatory exploits.

10. An inherited sin for the person taking the direction of procreation will be such sexual intercourse from which children cannot be born or when the parents are unable or unwilling to bring up the children born of their marriage.

11. When the person who has chosen the second way of serving God, via procreation, whether male or female, being already in sexual relationship with one person, enters into similar relationships with others, not for the sake of forming a family but to increase the pleasure arising from sexual intercourse, or tries to prevent childbearing, or indulges in unnatural vices, then such a person commits a personal sin of sexual lust.

12. The sin, i.e. mistake, of sexual lust for a person who has chosen the way of chastity, is that he, being able to choose the highest purpose and to use all his efforts to serve God, i.e. for the expansion of love and the attainment of the highest well-being, descends to the lowest level of life, and deprives himself of this blessing.

13. For a person who has chosen the direction of procreation, a sexual sin, or

a mistake, consists in that, when he deprives himself of having children, or, at least, of family relationship, he deprives himself of the highest benefits of sexual life.

14. In addition to this, people, in trying to maximize the pleasure of sexual intercourse, as with all the gratifications of needs, the more they give in to the lust, the more they diminish the natural pleasure.

## 22. The sin of intoxication

1. In the natural state, it is common to a human, just like to any animal, to come, under the influence of external causes, into a state of arousal, and this temporary excitement gives pleasure to the person in the animal state.
2. But when a human wakes up to his consciousness, he notices the causes which have led him into this state of excitement, and tries to reproduce and intensify these causes in order to recreate this state in him, and for that purpose he prepares for himself, and takes in his stomach or inhales, a substance which produces such arousal, or arranges such surroundings, or performs the particular movements which bring him to this condition. This constitutes the sin of intoxication.
3. The distinction of this sin is that, whereas all other sins only distract the human born to the new life from the activity pertaining to his nature by reinforcing his desire to continue his animal life, and do not weaken and do not disrupt the functioning of his mind, the sin of intoxication not only weakens the activity of the mind, but temporarily, and sometimes permanently, damages it; so that the person propelling himself into the state of excitement with the use of tobacco, wine, certain grand setting or vigorous movements, as the Dervishes and other religious fanatics do, often in these conditions commits not only acts attributed to animals, but acts which in their insanity and brutality are not characteristic of animals.
4. The only inborn sin of intoxication takes place when a person, having received pleasure from a certain state of arousal, whether produced by food, drink, or surroundings affecting his sense of sight or hearing, or certain movements, does not refrain from what produces this state of intoxication. When a person, unconsciously, without intention of exciting himself, eats refined food, drinks tea, beer, or cider, adorns himself or housing, dances or plays, he commits an inborn, natural sin of intoxication.
5. When a person was born and raised in certain habits of intoxication: habits of consuming tobacco, wine, opium, habits of grand shows - public, family,

or church - or habits of certain kinds of movements: gymnastics, dance, bows, jumping, etc., and maintains these habits, then such a person commits an inherited sin of intoxication.

6. When the a person, having been brought up in certain habits of regular intoxication and is accustomed to them, introduces, imitating others or coming up with new ways of intoxication himself: after tobacco starts to smoke opium, after the wine drinks vodka, introduces new grand celebrations with new increased influence of pictures, dances, light, music, or introduces new techniques for bodily excitatory movements: gymnastics, cycling, etc., then this person commits a personal sin of intoxication.

7. The essence of the sin of intoxication - innate, inherited, or personal - is that the person, instead of using all his efforts to eliminate everything that might dim his consciousness that reveals to him the meaning of his true life, strives, on the contrary, to weaken and obscure this consciousness by external means of confusion.

8. In addition, the person who acts this way, achieves the opposite effect from what he strives for. The arousal produced by external means is getting weaker with each new application of the excitement, and, despite the increase of the applications of the excitement, destroying health, the ability to excite himself weakens more and more.



## 23. The consequences of sins

1. Sins are the obstacles to manifestation of love.
2. Sins do not only hamper the manifestation of love, but also cause great calamities to people. These calamities are twofold: the first ones affect those who fall victims to sin; the second cause other people to suffer. The calamities that afflict those who commit sins, are: effeminacy, satiety, boredom, depression, apathy, anxiety, fear, suspicion, anger, hatred, bitterness, jealousy, powerlessness and all sorts of painful diseases. The calamities that afflict others are: theft, robbery, torture, beatings, murders.
3. If there were no sins, there would be no poverty, no satiety, no debauchery, no stealing, no robbery, no murder, no executions, no wars.
4. If it was not for the sin of lust, there would be neither poverty among the disadvantaged, no boredom or fear among the affluent, there would be no wasting of efforts to guard the pleasures of the affluent, no diminishing of the spiritual powers of the needy, no constant inherent struggle between the two classes that promotes envy and hatred in the first one, and contempt and fear in the latter; neither would this enmity break out periodically in the acts of violence, assassinations, revolutions.
5. If it wasn't for the sin of idleness, there would be, on one hand, no people exhausted by work, and on the other hand, no people spoiled by laziness and incessant entertainment; there would be no division of people into the two hostile camps: surfeited and hungry, idle and exhausted by work.
6. If it wasn't for the sin of greed, there would be not at all that violence that is committed by some people over others in order to purchase and retain goods; there would be no theft, robbery, confinement in prisons, exile, forced labor, execution.
7. If it wasn't for the sin of lust for power, there would not be those enormous useless wastes of human energies in order to overcome each other and to

maintain power; would be no pride or dullness of the winners, nor flattery, deception, or hatred of the defeated; there would be no divisions - family, social, or national - with resulting from them quarrels, fights, murders, wars.

8. If it was not for the sin of sexual lust, there would be no slavery of woman, torturing of her, and at the same time, pampering and perversion of her; there would be no quarrels, fights, or killings based on jealousy, would be no reducing of woman to the tool of satisfaction of the body lust, the prostitution; would be no unnatural vices; no weakening of bodily and spiritual powers, no those terrible diseases that afflict humans now; there would be no neglected children or infanticide.

9. If it wasn't for the sin of intoxication with wine, tobacco, opium, stimulating intensified movements, and partying, - people would not be reckless in their sins. There would be less than one percent of those quarrels, fights, robberies, adulteries, murders that happen now, especially under the influence of the weakening of people's spiritual powers; there would be no wastes of energies not only on unnecessary, but on directly harmful matters; people would not get into stupor, would not get mutilated as it often happens to the best people, spending their lives with no use to others and as a burden to themselves.

## Part 3. Temptations

## 24. Temptations

1. The devastating effects of the sins for individuals committing them, as well as for society among which the sins are committed, are so obvious that since ancient times people saw that sins lead to disasters, they preached and published laws against sins, and punished for them: forbade to steal, kill, debauch, smear, drink; but, despite the prohibition and executions, people continued and continue to sin, ruining their life and lives of those close to them.

2. This is happening because of such false justifications according to which there exceptional circumstances in which sins are not only forgivable but necessary. These false justifications are what is called temptations.

3. Temptation in Greek means a trap, a snare. Indeed, temptation is a trap into which a human is enticed under the guise of goodness, and, having been caught in it, dies in it. That is why it is said in the Gospel that temptations should enter the world, but woe unto the world because of the temptations, and woe to him through whom they come.

4. Because of these temptations, false excuses to sins, people do not get rid of sins, and continue to sink in them, and worst of all, raise young generations in them.

It is in the consequence of these temptations — these deceptive justifications — that people do not turn from their sins, but continue sinking in them, and worst of all, raise young generations in them.

## 25. The origin of temptations

1. The birth of a human to new life happens not at once but gradually, just as the physical birth: the pangs of birth alternate with stops and returns to the previous position, - the manifestation of spiritual life alternate with the manifestations of animal life; sometimes the person gives himself up to serving God and sees his well-being in it, other times he returns to his personal life and looks for the well-being of his own being, and commits sins.
2. Having committed sin, the person realizes the incompatibility of his act with the requirements of the conscience. While the person only wants to commit a sin, this conflict is not evident yet. But as soon the sin is committed, the discord is revealed, and the person wishes to eradicate it.
3. The only possible way to eradicate the discord of the act and of the situation in which the person enters as a result of the sin is by using his mind to justify the committed act and the situation.
4. The only way to justify the discord of the sin with the requirements of the spiritual life is by justifying the sin by the requirements of spiritual life. That is what people do, and this mental exercise of people is called the temptation.
5. From the time when the realization of the contradictions between animal and spiritual life is revealed in people, since people began to commit sins, people started inventing excuses for them, i.e., the temptations, and, consequently, the practices of the same excuses for sins, i.e. of temptations, were established among people, so that a person does not need to invent any excuses for his sins, - they are already invented before him, and he only needs to accept ready, compiled temptations.

## 26. The classification of temptations

1. There are five temptations destroying people:
  1. the personal temptation, or preparation;
  2. the temptation of family, or the temptation of procreation;
  3. the temptation of busyness, or the temptation to usefulness;
  4. the temptation of fellowship, or the temptation of loyalty;
  5. the temptation of the state, or the temptation of the common good.

2. The personal temptation, or the temptation of preparation, takes place when a person committing sins uses an excuse that he is preparing for an activity which in the future must be useful to people.

3. The temptation of family, or procreation, takes place when a person committing sins excuses himself with the well-being of his children.

4. The temptation of busyness, or usefulness, takes place when a person committing sins excuses himself with the need of carrying out and completing of the initiated by him and useful to people work.

5. The temptation of fellowship, or loyalty, takes place when a person committing sins excuses himself with the well-being of those people with whom he had entered into an exclusive relationship.

6. The temptation of the state, or the temptation of the common good, takes place when a person committing sins excuses himself with the well-being of many people, a nation, the humanity. This temptation is expressed by Caiaphas when he demanded the execution of Christ in the name of the well-being of many.

## 27. The personal temptation, or the temptation of preparation

1. "I know that the meaning of my life is not in serving myself but in serving God or people; but in order to successfully serve people," - says the person who fell for this temptation, - "I can allow some digressions from the requirements of my conscience, if they are necessary for my improvement that is preparing me for the future activity useful to people; first I need to learn, first need to finish my term of service, first need to improve my health, first need to marry, first need to provide the means of living in the future, and so far I can't quite follow the demands of my conscience, but when I finish that, then I'll begin to live exactly as my conscience requires."
2. By acknowledging the need of taking care of his personal life for sake of the most effective service to people and for the manifestations of love in the future, the person serves his own self, committing sins - of lust, and idleness, and property, and power, and even sexual lust, and intoxication - not regarding those sins as notable because he lets himself do them only for a while, during the time when he directs all his efforts to prepare himself to actively serve others.
3. Having started to serve his self, preserving, strengthening and perfecting it, the person naturally forgets the purpose for which he does this, and gives up his best years, and sometimes the whole life, to such preparation for the service that never comes.
4. Meanwhile, the sins he permitted himself for the sake of good purpose become more habitual and comfortable, and the person, instead of the intended activities useful to people, spends lifetime in sins that kill his own life and entice other people and hurt them. This is the temptation of preparation.

## 28. The temptation of family, or of procreation

1. People, when enter family relationship, mostly women, are tend to think that their love for family and children is the same what their reasonable consciousness asks of them, and therefore, if in the family life they have to commit sins to satisfy their family needs, such sins are forgivable.

2. And, have convinced themselves of this, such people regard as acceptable, in the name of family love, not only to excuse themselves from the requirements of fairness to other people, but also, with the confidence that they are acting rightly, commit, for the sake of the well-being of their children, the greatest cruelty against strangers.

3. "If I had no wife, husband, or children," - say people who fall for this temptation, - "I would have lived quite differently and did not commit those sins; but now, in order to raise children, I cannot live otherwise. If we didn't live this way and did not commit these sins, the human race would cease to exist".

4. And, by this reasoning, the person quietly robs people of the fruits of their labor, makes them work hard to detriment of their lives, deprives people of their land and - the most striking example - robs a child of its milk, in order for its mother to feed his own baby, and he does not see any evil in what he does. This is the essence of the temptation of family, or of reproduction.



## 29. The temptation of busyness

1. A human, by his nature, must exercise his mental and bodily strengths, and to exercise them he chooses an activity.
2. Every activity requires certain actions in a certain time, so if these actions are not performed in due time, then the useful to people work gets ruined without bringing any benefit to anyone.
3. "I need to finish tilling my field with seeds already sown; if I won't do this, both seeds and my work will be wasted with no use to anybody. I need to complete my work by this deadline; if I won't finish it, the work that could be useful will be wasted. I have a factory running that produces necessary to people goods and keeps ten thousand workers employed; if I interrupt its work, the goods will not be produced and people will lose their jobs," say people who fall for this temptation.
4. And, by having concluded this, the person not only does not leave his field untilled to help his neighbor to pull out his horse stuck in swamp, not only does not drop his urgent work to sit for a day by a sick person's bedside, not only does not stop the factory work that destroys people's health, but he is willing to use his neighbor's misfortune to till his land, ready to withdraw another person from the care after a sick in order to finish his own work on time, ready to ruin the health of several generations of people, only to have the well processed goods made. This is the essence of the temptation of busyness, or usefulness.

## 30. The temptation of fellowship

1. Having entered, accidentally or on purpose, into certain equal conditions, people tend to separate themselves with people in the same conditions from anyone else, and to consider themselves, to preserve the advantages of people in these exceptional circumstances, as being obliged to retreat from the demands of their own conscience and not only to prefer the benefits of their own people to the benefits of others, but even to do evil to people in order not to break the allegiance to “their own”.

2. “These people clearly do the wrong thing, but these are our fellows, and therefore it is necessary to hide and justify their wrong affairs. What they ask me to do is immoral, meaningless, but all my fellows have decided on this, and I cannot fall behind them. It may cause a suffering, a disaster to outsiders, but to us and our fellowship it will be favorable, and therefore it is necessary to act this way.”

3. There are a variety of such fellowships. Such is the partnership of two murderers or thieves going on their business and considering their loyalty to partners, for the commitment of the attempted business, as more binding than faithfulness to conscience, which condemns the attempted business; the same are the fellowships of students of educational institutions, of trade workers, of regiments, of scientists, of clerics, of rulers.

4. All these people consider allegiance to the institution of their partnership as more binding than the fidelity to the requirements of their conscience in relation to all other people. This is the essence of the temptation of fellowship, or of loyalty.

5. The distinction of this temptation is that in the name of it the most wild and irrational actions are committed, like dressing oneself up in some special, strange clothes and attributing to these clothes some special importance, and the acts like poisoning oneself with wine, beer; and very often, in the name of the same temptation causing hostility of one partnership to another, terrible acts of brutality are committed - fights, duels, murders, etc.

## 31. The temptation of state

1. People live in a certain social order; and this order, just like everything in the world, constantly changes, according to the growth of consciousness in humans.

2. But people, especially those for whom existing order is more advantageous than for others (and the existing order is always more profitable for some people than for others), believe that the existing order benefits all people, and thus, in order to maintain these benefits for all the people, they not only believe that it is acceptable to violate the law for some people, but they consider it fair and good to commit the greatest atrocities in order to maintain the existing order.

3. People have established the right of ownership, and some own both land and tools, while others have neither. And this unfair possession by some, not the working people, of lands and the tools of labor is considered to be that order which must be guarded and for which it is considered fair and good to lock, to execute people who violate this order. Similarly, because of the danger that a neighboring nation or a ruler can attack our people and conquer and destroy and alter the established order, it is considered fair and good not only to promote the establishment of army, but also to be prepared to murder other people and to kill them.

4. The distinction of this temptation is that, whereas in the name of those first four temptations people retreat from the demands of their conscience and commit isolated bad deeds, for the sake of the temptation of state the most horrible evil is committed, such as executions and wars, and the most atrocious crimes against the majority are carried out, like previous slavery and current withholding of land from workers. People would not commit these atrocities if they did not invent the practices by means of which the responsibility for these atrocities is distributed among people so that no one feels the severity of it.

5. The technique of distributing such responsibility, so that no one feels the

severity, consists in recognizing the need for authority, which for the sake of its citizens must prescribe these evildoings; but subordinates, for the sake of benefit of all, must fulfill the requirements of the authority.

6. "I really regret that I have to prescribe the seizure of the products of labor, imprisonment, exile, penal servitude, execution, war, i.e. the massacre, but I am obliged to do so, because people who gave me the power require this from me," say people who are in power. "If I seize properties from people, take people away from their families, lock, execute, if I kill people of a foreign nation, desolate them, shoot into women and children in a city, I do that not on my own responsibility, but because I fulfill the will of the supreme power which I promised to obey for the common benefit". This is the temptation of state, or of the common good.

## 32. The consequences of temptations

1. Sins are the consequences of habits (inertia, animal life). Fully charged animal life cannot stop even when reason gets already awakened in the person and the person realizes the futility of animal life. The person already knows that animal life is meaningless and cannot give him well-being, but out of old habit he keeps seeking meaning and happiness in the pleasures of animal life: in satisfying sophisticated artificial needs, in permanent idleness, in the increase of property, in the power over others, in sexual lust, in intoxication, and directs his mind toward the attainment of these ends.

2. But sins bring their own punishment: very soon the person feels that the well-being he sought this way is not unattainable. And the sin loses its appeal. So, if it wasn't for the excuses for sins – the temptations, - people would not get sunk in their sins and would not to bring them to extremes they are brought now.

3. If it was not for the temptations of preparation, the temptation of family, the temptation of busyness, the temptation of the state, not even the most cold-hearted person would, in the midst of the needy people dying from the lack of necessities, be able to indulge in the excesses which rich people do now; the rich would not come to the state of complete physical idleness in which, bored, they now live, forcing often the old, children, and weak to do work they need for themselves. If it was not for the temptation of property, people would not, without meaning, without a goal, spend their life energies on acquiring more and more possessions which cannot be used; and people suffering from a fight would not cultivate it in others. If it was not for the temptation of fellowship, there would be not one percent of the corruption that takes place now, people would not be so obviously and pointlessly ruining their bodily, mental powers by intoxicating substances, which do not increase but reduce their energies.

4. Because of human sins there is poverty and overwork of some people, and satiety and idleness of others; because of sins there is inequality of possessions, there are struggles, quarrels, litigations, executions, wars;

because of sins there are tragedies of depravity and brutality of people; but because of temptations there is establishment, consecration of all this: legalization of poverty and the suppression of some people, and the satiety and idleness of others, the legalization of violence, murders, wars, debauchery, drunkenness and exalting them to those terrible dimensions, which they have reached now.

## Part 4. Religious deception and the means of deliverance from it

### 33. Religious deception

1. If it were not for temptations, people would not continue to live in sins, since every sin punishes itself: people of previous generations would point to their descendants on the destructiveness of sins, and subsequent generations would be raised without falling into habit of sin.
2. But a human has used given to him reason not to learn from sin in order to get rid of it but to justify it; and temptation has appeared, and sin is legalized and rooted.
3. But how could a person with awakened reason take lies for truth? In order for a person not to see a lie and take it for truth, his mind must be perverted, because not perverted mind accurately distinguishes lies from truth, and this is its purpose.
4. Indeed, the mind of people raised in human society is never free from perversion. Every person raised in human society inevitably undergoes the perversion of religious deception.
5. Religious deception is committed when people of former generations, by various artificial means, inspire their descendants with understanding of the meaning of life based not on reason but on blind trust.
6. The essence of religious deception is that the concepts of faith and trust are deliberately intermixed and substituted one for another: it is asserted that a human cannot live and think without faith, which is fair enough; and the definition of faith, - i.e. recognition that there is something that is perceived by his reason but cannot be defined by mind, such as God, the soul, goodness, - is substituted with the concept of trust that there is God in a certain form, in three persons, who at stated time has created the world and opened to people certain things at certain places and through certain prophets.



## 34. The origin of religious deception

1. The humanity is slowly but nonstop moving forward, i.e. toward greater and greater understanding of truth about the meaning and significance of its life and toward the establishment of life in conformity with this clarified consciousness. And therefore the understanding by humans of their life and the human life itself are constantly changing. People more sensitive to truth understand life in accordance with the supreme light which is appeared in them, and according to this light arrange their lives; people less sensitive hold on to their old understanding of life and to the old order of life, and try to defend it.
2. So in the world, next to people pointing out to the most recent progressive expression of truth and trying to live according to this expression of truth, there are always people who cherish the old anachronistic and already needless understanding of it and the former orders of life.

## 35. How religious deceptions are committed

1. Truth does not need outward confirmation and is freely accepted by all to whom it is passed; but deception requires special techniques through which it could be conveyed to humans and be absorbed by them; and therefore, for carrying out of religious deception, those who commit it, in all nations, use always the same techniques.

2. These are five techniques: 1) misinterpretation of truth, 2) belief in miracles, 3) establishment of intermediaries between a human and God, 4) impact on outer senses of a human, and 5) indoctrination of children with false belief.

3. The essence of the first technique of religious deception is to verbally accept not only the validity of truth opened to people by the latest preachers, but to recognize the preacher himself as Holy supernatural entity, to deify the preacher, to attribute to him the performance of various miracles, and to hide the essence of the opened truth, so that it would not only not disrupt the prior understanding of life, but, on the contrary, would endorse it. Such misinterpretation of truth and deification of its preachers have been practised in all nations, with any appearance of new religious doctrine. This way the teaching of Moses and Jewish prophets was misinterpreted. With the same misinterpretation Christ reproached Pharisees, by telling to them that they sat on the Moses seat and neither enter the Kingdom of God themselves nor allow others to enter. The same way the teachings of Buddha, Lao Tse, Zarathustra were misinterpreted. The same misinterpretation is done to the Christian teaching in early times of its adoption by Constantine when pagan temples and deities were converted to Christian and Mohammedanism appeared as counteract against the pseudo-Christian polytheism. Mohammedanism underwent and undergoes the same misinterpretation.

4. The second technique of religious deception is to influence people that following our God-given reason in our search for truth is a sin of pride, that there's another, more reliable, way of cognition: the revelation of truth transferred by God directly to chosen people, accompanied with certain signs,

miracles, i.e. supernatural events that confirm the trustworthiness of the transfer. It is inspired what one needs to believe not his reason but miracles, i.e. what is contrary to reason.

5. The third technique of religious deception is to assure people that they cannot have direct relationship with God, which every human feels and which became especially clear to Christ who recognized a human as a son of God, that for the communication with God an intermediary or intermediaries are required. To play the role of such intermediaries, prophets, saints, Church, scripture, elders, dervishes, Llamas, Buddhas, hermits, any clergy are placed. No matter how different all of these intermediaries, the essence of mediation is that direct connection between human and God is not recognized, but, on the contrary, it is assumed that truth is not available to a human but only may be accepted through the belief in intermediaries between him and God.

6. The fourth technique of religious deception is that, under the pretext of committing allegedly required by God deeds: prayers, sacraments, sacrifices, they collect together a lot of people, and via subjecting them to various stupefying effects, inspire lie on them, while dressing it as truth. They impress people with the beauty and grandeur of temples, the splendor of ornaments, utensils, clothes, glitter lighting, the sounds of singing and organs, incense, exclamations, and while people are under this charm, make efforts to impress upon their souls lies presented as truth.

7. The fifth technique is the most brutal, because it consists in giving a child, - who asks seniors lived before him and having opportunity to learn wisdom prior to currently living people, - an answer about what is this world and his life, and what is the relationship between the first and the latter, the answer containing not what these elders think and know, but what people who lived thousands of years ago thought, and in which no adult believes any longer and cannot believe. Instead of the spiritual, essential for him, food which the child asks for, he is given a poison ruining his spiritual health, from which he can recover only with the greatest efforts and sufferings.

8. A child, waking up to his conscious life with clear, uncluttered mind, ready

to accept, and at heart albeit vaguely but is aware of the truth of life, i.e. his position and the purpose in it (human soul is Christian by nature, in the words of Tertullian, the father of Church); the child asks his grown-up parent: what is his life? How does he correspond to the world and its beginning? And his father or his teacher is not telling him that little and unquestionable truth that he knows about the meaning of life, but confidently tells that what deep inside he recognizes as not true, - if he is a Jew, he says that God has created the world in six days and opened the whole truth to Moses by writing with his finger on the rock that you've got to keep the oaths, remember the Sabbath day, circumcise, etc.; if his father is an Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran Christian, - that Christ, the second person, has created the world and come down to Earth to atone for the sin of Adam with his blood, etc.; if he's a Buddhist, - that the Buddha flew to heaven and taught people to destroy life in them; if he is a Mohammedan, than Mohammed flew to the seventh heaven and learned there a law under which belief in fivefold prayer and visiting Mecca will bring paradise for a man in the future life.

9. And, knowing that different people inspire their children with different beliefs, parents and teachers convey each their own peculiar superstitions, while knowing deep inside that this is only a superstition, - still pass their superstitions to innocent, trusting children at the age when impressions are so strong that they will already never fade.

## 36. Evil resulting from religious deception

1. Sins, by making a person at times commit deeds contrary to his spiritual nature, contrary to love, delay his birth to new true life.
2. Temptations lead a human to sinful life by justifying sins, so that he already commits not isolated sinful deeds but lives animal life without seeing the contradictions between it and true life.
3. Such a position of the human is only possible when truth is perverted by the ongoing religious deception. Only the person with mind perverted by religious deception is not able to see the lies of temptations.
4. And therefore religious deception is the foundation for all the human sins and disasters.
5. The essence of religious deception is what in the Gospel is called blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and it is said that this action cannot be forgiven, i.e. never, in any life, can be not destructive.

### 37. What must a person do to live according to the teaching of Christ?

1. In order to live according to the teaching of Christ, a person must remove the obstacles to true life, that is, the manifestation of love.
2. These obstacles are sins. But sins cannot be destroyed until the person frees himself from temptations. And only the person who is free from religious deception can break free from temptations.
3. And therefore, in order to live according to the teaching of Christ, a person needs, first of all, to free himself from religious deceptions.
4. Only having freed himself from religious deceptions, can a person break free from the deceptions of temptations; and only having understood the deceptions of temptations can a person free himself from sins.

## 38. Liberation from religious deception

1. In order to break free from religious deception in general, a person needs to understand and remember that the only means of cognition a human has is his reason, and therefore any sermon asserting anything contrary to reason is a deception, an attempt to remove the only given by God to a human tool for acquiring knowledge.

2. In order to be free from religious deception, a person must understand and remember that there isn't and cannot be any, except reason, instrument of knowledge – so that whether he wants it or not, every person believes only his reason, and that therefore people who tell that they believe not their reason but Moses, Buddha, Christ, Muhammad, the Church, the Koran, the Bible, deceive themselves because whatever they believe, they believe not the one who transfers them the truth they believe in, - Moses, Buddha, Christ, Bible, - but believe the reason that tells them that they should believe Moses, Christ, the Bible and should not believe Buddha and Mohammed, Bible, or vice versa.

3. Truth cannot enter the person by any other way rather than by reason, and therefore a person who thinks he knows truth by faith and not by reason only deceives himself and wrongfully uses his reason on something it is not intended to, - to solve questions about whom to believe among those who transfer the doctrine presented as truth, and who should not be trusted. But reason is given not to decide who to believe and who not to believe, and it cannot decide on that, but to verify the validity of what is being offered to him. Reason can always do this and it is designed for that.

4. Misinterpreters of truth typically tell that reason cannot be trusted because reason of different people asserts different things, and that therefore for unification of people it is better to believe in revelation, confirmed by miracles. But this claim is directly opposite of truth. Reason never makes different claims. It always, in all people, claims and denies the same.

5. It is only beliefs that claim each different from another: one - that God has

revealed himself on Sinai and that he is the God of the Jews; and the other - that God is Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva; and third - that God is Trinity: father, son and holy spirit; and fourth - that God is the heavens and the Earth; and fifth - that truth is opened by Buddha; and the sixth - that all of it was opened by Muhammad, - only these faiths divide people, but reason always in everybody says the same.

6. When they say that reason can lie and to prove that bring discordant claims by different people about what God is and how to serve him, then those who say this - make intentional or unintentional mistake by mixing reason with speculations and fantasies. Speculations and fantasies can really be infinitely diverse and different, but mind conclusions are always the same for all people at all times. Speculations and fantasies about how the world or sin has occurred, and what will happen after death can be infinitely different, but the conclusions of reason on whether it is true that three God together constitute one, whether is it true that a person has died and then rose again, whether is it true that a person walked on the water or in his body flew to the sky, or that by consuming bread and wine I consume body and blood, - the conclusions of reason in regards to these questions are always the same for all people and throughout the world and are undoubtedly always correct. Whether they tell that God walked in a flame of fire, or that the Buddha flew on the rays of the Sun, or Mohammed flew to the Heaven, or Christ walked on water etc., reason of all people everywhere and always gives the same answer: that is not true. But to questions whether: Is it fair to treat others the way you want them to treat you? Is it good to love people and forgive them their offences and be compassionate? - reason of all people at all times says: Yes, this is right, this is good.

7. And therefore, in order not to fall for religious deceptions, a person must understand and remember that truth is open to him only in his reason, given by God to humans to understand God's will, and that implanting distrust toward reason carries in itself the desire to deceive and the greatest blasphemy.

8. This is general way of liberating oneself from religious deceptions. But in order to be free from religious deceptions, it is necessary to know all kinds of



these deceptions and beware of them, confront them.

## 39. Liberating from religious deception indoctrinated from childhood

1. In order for a human to live according to the teachings of Christ, he must first break free from religious deception in which he was brought up, - whether it was religious deception of Hebrew, Buddhist, Japanese, Confucian, or Christian.

2. And to break free from religious deception in which a person is often raised from childhood, a person should understand and remember that reason is given to him directly from God and only it can unite all people, while human religions do not connect but divide people, and therefore he should not only not to fear of any doubts and questions raised by reason when it questions indoctrinated from childhood beliefs, but rather carefully expose to the examination, and comparison with other creeds, all those beliefs that were transferred to him since childhood, and recognize as fair only that which does not contradict reason, no matter how impressive it is presented and how old is the conveyed religion.

3. Having subjected beliefs, indoctrinated into him since childhood, to the court of reason, the person, wanting to free himself from religious deception which was inspired in him in childhood, must boldly and unconditionally reject everything that is contrary to reason, not for a moment doubting that what is contrary to reason cannot be true.

4. Having freed himself from religious deception, indoctrinated in him since childhood, a person, who wishes to live according to the teachings of Christ, must not only by word, by example, or by silence not to contribute to the deception of children, but by all means expose this deception, according to Christ, who pitied children for the deceptions to which they are being exposed.

## 40. Getting rid of religious deception produced by impacting on outer senses

1. Having freed himself from religious deception indoctrinated in him since childhood, a person should beware of deception produced by deceivers of all peoples by means of impacting on the external senses.

2. In order not to fall for this deception, a person must understand and remember that truth, to be disseminated and assimilated by people, does not require any gears or decorations, and that only lies and deceptions, in order to be perceived by people, need special conditions of transferring them; so all sorts of festive services, processions, decorations, incense, singing etc. not only do not indicate that it is truth that is passed that under these conditions, but, on the contrary, serve as a sure sign that where these techniques are used it is not truth but a lie is conveyed.

3. To avoid falling under the deception of the impact on outer senses, people should remember the words of Christ that one needs to serve God not in some known location, but in the spirit and truth, and who wants to pray must go not into a temple, but lock himself in the privacy of his room, knowing that any splendor in worshipping God has deception for its purpose, and the more fascinating the service the more brutal deception is, and therefore he must not only not to participate in the stupefying religious ceremonies, but wherever possible expose their deception.

## 41. Letting go of the deception of mediation

1. Having freed himself from the second deception, of the impact on outer senses, a human must still beware of the deception of mediation between him and God, which, if he only allows it, will certainly conceal prayer from him.

2. To not to fall for the deception of mediation, a person should understand and remember that God opens himself only directly to human heart and that every broker standing between people and God, be it one person, a congregation of persons, a book or a legend, icon, relics, Church, Christ, not only hides God from the person but does the worst evil that can befall a human, namely that the human regards as God that what is not God.

3. As soon as a person lets himself believe in any mediation, he has deprived himself of the only opportunity of authenticating knowledge and opened the possibility of perceiving any lie to be truth.

4. Only due to instituting mediation between people and God those terrible deceptions become possible to perpetrate and are being perpetrated, as a result of which reasonable and kind people pray to Christ, God, Buddha, Muhammad, Saints, relics, icons.

5. In order not to fall for this deception, a person must understand and remember that truth is open to him primarily and most reliably not in a book, not in a legend, not in any assembly of people, but in his own heart and mind, just as Moses told when he declared to the people that they should look for the law of God not over sea, nor in the sky, but in their own hearts, and how Christ told this to Jews, saying “you do not know truth because you believe the legends of a man, but not the one He has sent.” And what God sent to us is reason – the only and infallible tool of cognition that is given to us.

6. To not to fall for the deception of mediation, the person should understand and remember that truth can never be opened all at once, that it gradually opens to people, and opens only to those who look for it, and not to those who, by believing what the allegedly infallible brokers convey to them, think

that possess it; and therefore, in order not to expose himself to the danger of falling for the most terrible delusions, a person should not accept anyone as infallible teacher but seek truth everywhere, in all traditions of mankind, and validate them by his own reason. Having freed himself from this deception, the person must, in word and deed, reprove the deception of mediation committed over others.

## 42. Letting go of belief in miracles

1. But even having freed himself from the deception indoctrinated from childhood, and not falling for the deception of influence by impressive ceremonies, and not recognizing the mediation between him and God, a human will still not be free from religious deception and will not be able to understand the teachings of Christ, if he does not get rid of belief in the supernatural, the miraculous.

2. Some say that miracles, i.e. the supernatural, are committed in order to unite people; meanwhile, nothing separates people like miracles because each religion asserts its own miracles and rejects the miracles of other religions. And it cannot be otherwise: miracles, i.e. the supernatural, are infinitely varied, and only the natural is always and everywhere the same.

3. And therefore, to be free from the deceptions of belief in magic, a person must recognize as true only that what is natural, i.e., in accordance with his reason, and recognize as lie all that is unnatural, that contradicts reason, knowing that everything that is presented as such is human hoax, such as deceptions of any modern miracles, healings, raisings of the dead, miracle-working icons, relics, transubstantiation of bread and wine, etc., as well as the wonders that can be found in the Bible, in the Gospels, in Buddhist, Mohammedan, Lao-Tzean, and other books.

## 43. Letting go of the deception of misinterpretation of truth

1. After letting go of the deception of mediation, a person needs to break free from the deception of misinterpretation of truth.
2. In whatever belief a person was raised: in Islamic, Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, or Confucian, - in any teaching of faith, a human runs into an assertion of indisputable truth recognized by his reason, and next to it - statements contrary to reason, presented as equally valid.
3. In order to rid himself of this religious deception, a person should not get confused when the truths, some of which are accepted by reason and others not accepted by it, are presented as being equally authentic, of the same origin, and seemingly inextricably connected with each other; but he must understand and remember that any revelation of truth to people (i.e. any new understanding of truth by one of the most advanced people) always so impressed people that it got wrapped into a supernatural form, and so inevitably to each manifestation of truth superstitions were added; and therefore for the understanding of truth it is not only unnecessary to take everything that is conveyed about the revelation of truth, but, on the contrary, it is necessary to separate the conveyed lies and fiction from truth and reality.
4. Having separated truth from superstitions attached to it, let the person understand and remember that superstitions intermixed with truth are not only not as sacred as truth itself, as it is preached by people who find their gains in these superstitions, but, on the contrary, they constitute the most devastating and harmful phenomenon that hides truth and to the destruction of which a human must put all his strengths.

## Part V. Avoiding temptations



## 44. How to avoid temptations

1. Having freed himself from religious deceptions, a person would be able to comprehend the teachings of Christ if it weren't for temptations. But – even being free of religious deception and having understood the meaning of the teaching of Christ, the human is always in danger of falling into temptations.

2. The essence of all temptations is that a person, awakened to consciousness, experiences splitting and suffering because of the committed sin, and wants to destroy the splitting and the suffering following it, not by conquering the sin but by justifying it.

3. And the justification of a sin can't be anything but a lie.

4. And therefore, to avoid falling into a temptation, a person, first and foremost, needs not to be afraid to acknowledge truth, and to know that this acknowledgement cannot distance him further from well-being, whereas the opposite, the lie, is the main source of sin and moves him away from well-being.

5. So, to avoid temptations a human must, first of all, not to lie and, above all, not to lie to himself, care not so much about not lying to others as much as about not lying to himself by hiding from himself the motives for his own actions.

6. In order not to fall into temptations, and arising from the temptations habit of sin, and downfall, a person should not be afraid to repent of his sins, and should know that repentance is the only way of liberation from sin and the subsequent tragedies.

7. This is an overall approach to ensure that the person does not fall into temptations in general. But in order to be able to avoid every single temptation, you must clearly understand what constitutes its deception and what harm it causes.

## 45. The deception of personal temptation, or the temptation of preparation

1. The first and most common temptation that traps a human is personal temptation, the temptation of preparing for life instead of living it. If a person does not come up with excuses for sin himself, then he will always find an excuse already invented by people who lived before him.

2. "Now I can temporarily deviate from what I should do and what my spiritual nature demands, because I'm not ready," says a person. "But after I prepare myself, the time will come, and then I'll start living already quite in accordance with my conscience."

3. The trick of this temptation is that the person retreats from life in the present, the only real life, and projects it into the future, while the future does not belong to a human.

4. The distinction of the deception of this temptation is in the fact that as a person is able to anticipate the next day, then he must anticipate the day after the next, and after, and after... And if he is able to foresee all of these, then he can foresee his inevitable death, too. In the anticipation of his imminent death, he cannot keep preparing for the future in this finite life, because death defeats the meaning of what the human prepares for in this life. The person who sets his mind free cannot but see that the life of his separate being does not make sense and therefore no preparations for this being could be made.

5. On the other hand, the deception of this temptation is evident because a human cannot prepare himself for the future manifestation of love and of service to God: human is not a tool that somebody else uses. You may sharpen an axe and have no time to use it, someone else will use it; but no one can utilize a person except himself, because he himself is a tool, constantly working and perfecting itself only at work.

6. The harm of this temptation is that the person who has fallen into it lives neither true nor even temporary life in the present and projects his life into

the future, which never comes. By thinking to perfect himself for the future, the individual misses the only available to each person opportunity to perfect himself in love, which can only take place in the present.

7. In order not to fall into this temptation, a person must understand and remember that there is no time to prepare, that he must live in the best way now, as he is; and that the perfecting is in love, and this perfecting is done only in the present.

8. And therefore he must, without postponing, live every moment with all his strengths, in the now, for God, i.e. for all who makes demands upon his life, knowing that at any moment he may be deprived of the possibility of this serving and that precisely for this exact continual service he came into the world.

## 46. Deception and harm of the temptation of busyness

1. Any person, while performing certain work, involuntarily gets preoccupied with it, and it seems to him that for the sake of the work he can skip doing what is required of him by his conscience, that is, God.
2. The trick of this temptation is in the fact that any human work may turn out useless or may be interrupted and remain unfinished; whereas the work of God, which is accomplished by a human through the fulfilment of the will of God, can never be useless nor be interrupted by anything.
3. And the harm of this temptation is that, assuming that any work, - whether it is ploughing of scattered seeds or the liberation of the whole nation from slavery - is more important than that which often seems the most insignificant to human judgement, work of God, i.e. immediate help and service to one's neighbor, there will always be cases that need to be finished before fulfilling the requirement of the work of God; and people will forever excuse themselves from serving God, i.e. from the doing the work of life, by substituting serving the dead for serving the living.
4. The harm of it is that, having fallen into this temptation, people will always put off serving God until they are free from all the cares of the world. And people are never free of the cares of the world. In order not to fall into this temptation, a person must understand and remember that every human affair, which is finite, can't be the goal of his true infinite life, and that such a goal can only be participation in the endless work of God, consisting in the greatest manifestation of love.
5. And therefore, in order not to fall into the temptation of busyness, a human must never do his own work that violates the work of God, i.e. love for people; must always be ready to drop any work as soon as the committing the work of God is required of him: to be like an employee hired to do master's work and allowed to run his own affairs only when master's cause does not demand his efforts and attention.

## 47. The deception and harm of the temptation of family

1. This temptation justifies people's sins more than any other. People might be free from the temptation of preparation to life and the temptation of busyness, but a rare person, especially a woman, is free from the temptation of family.

2. This temptation appears when people, in the name of their exclusive love of their own families, consider themselves being free from obligations to other people and serenely commit sins of greed, idleness, lust, not regarding them as sins.

3. The trick of this temptation is that animal instinct, the drive to procreate, which is legitimate only in so far as it does not violate the love of people, is taken as a virtue that justifies sins.

4. The evil of this temptation is that this temptation more than any other augments the sin of property, intensifies struggle between people by exalting animal instinct of the love for one's own family as merit and virtue, diverts people from the opportunity of discovering the true meaning of life.

5. In order not to fall into this temptation, a person not only must not cultivate in himself the love for his own family, must not regard this love as virtue, and must not yield to it, but on the contrary, knowing the temptation, must always be on guard against it, to not to sacrifice the godly love for the family love.

6. One can love one's enemies, unattractive people, or strangers without reservation, and altogether give one's self up to this love, but he cannot love the members of his own family that way, because such love leads to blindness and to the justification of sins.

7. To not to fall into this temptation, a person must understand and remember that love only then is true love, which gives life and well-being, when it neither seeks nor expects nor hopes for recompense, just as no other manifestation of life expects recompense for its existence; and that love for

his own family is an animal instinct and is good only so long as it is kept within the limits of the instinct and so long as the person does not sacrifice his spiritual demands for its sake.

8. And therefore, in order not to fall for this temptation, a person should endeavour to do for any stranger the same that he wishes to do for his family, and not to do for his family anything that he is not ready and cannot do for any stranger.

## 48. The deception and harm of the temptation of fellowship

1. Having separated themselves from others and tied themselves together under certain exceptional conditions, people think that, if they maintain these conditions, they are doing such a good job that it exempts them from the general demands of their conscience.
2. The trick of this temptation consists in the fact that, by entering into fellowship with a certain small number of people, people distinguish themselves from the natural communion of all people, and therefore violate the most important natural duties in the name of made-up ones.
3. The harm of this temptation consists in the fact that people who have bound themselves together in a partnership are guided not by common laws of reason but by their own exclusive rules, depart further and further from those reasonable principles of life common to all people, becoming less tolerant and more cruel to all outside their fellowship, and thus deprive themselves and others of true well-being.
4. To avoid falling into this temptation, a person must understand and remember that the rules of fellowships established by people may vary infinitely, be infinitely changeable and contradictory, that no rule artificially set by people should bind him if it may be contrary to the law of love, and that every exclusive union of people limits the circle of communication and deprives the person of chief condition of his well-being, the opportunity of loving communion with all people in the world.
5. And therefore one must not only refrain from joining any societies, fellowships, and associations, but, on the contrary, avoid anything that may exclude him and others from the rest people of the world.

## 49. Deception and harm of the temptation of state

1. This, the most brutal, deception is transferred to people in the same way as false religion, - by two means of deception: the indoctrination of children with lies, and the influence exerted on people's feelings by external solemnity. Almost all people living in governmental states, upon their awakening to consciousness, find themselves already entangled in state temptations and live in belief that their nation, their state, their fatherland is the best, special people, state, fatherland, and for the benefits and success of which they should blindly obey the existing government and, at the behest of the government, torture, injure, and kill their fellows.

2. The deception of this temptation is that a person, supposedly for the sake of the well-being of the nation, can refuse the demands of his conscience and his moral freedom.

3. The evil of this temptation is that once a person allows the possibility of learning and understanding what constitutes the well-being of many people, there is no limit to assumptions about that that well-being of many is, which can be derived from any act, and therefore any act can be justified, and once the person believes that for the good of the many in the future you can sacrifice well-being and life of one man, there are no limits to evil that can be committed in the name of such consideration. The first assumption - that people are capable of knowing what constitutes the future well-being of many - has been responsible in former times for torture, inquisition, and slavery, and in our time - for the courts of law, prisons, and land ownership. Based on the second assumption of Caiaphas, Christ was murdered in the old time, and now executions and wars are killing millions.

4. In order not to fall into this temptation, a person must understand and remember that he, before belonging to any nation or people, belongs to God, as a member of the worldwide kingdom, and he cannot shift the responsibility for his actions on anyone else, and he is always personally responsible for them.



5. And therefore a person must never, under any circumstances, prefer people of his own nation or state – to those of another nation or state, under no considerations, as to the future well-being of many, must he commit evil to his neighbors; and he must not feel obligated to obey anyone in preference to his own conscience.

## Part 6. Battling sins

## 50. Battling sins

1. But, having freed himself from religious deception and escaped temptations, a human still falls into sins. A person with awakened consciousness knows that the meaning of his life is only in serving God, and yet he commits sins out of habit, impeding both the manifestation of love and the attainment of true well-being.

2. How can a person battle a sinful habit?

3. There are two means of battling sinful habits: first, to clearly understand the consequences of sins - that sins do not bring the purpose for which they are committed, and do not increase but rather decrease the animal well-being of the separate individual; secondly, to know which sins a human must begin to deal with, i.e. which to handle first, and which - after.

4. And therefore, firstly, it is always necessary to clearly understand and remember that the position of a human in the world is that every search for his personal well-being, once he woke up to the conscious awareness, deprives him of that well-being, and that, on the contrary, he receives well-being only when he does not think about his personal well-being and gives all his energy to serving God. “You must search for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and the rest will be added onto you.”

5. And, secondly, to combat sinful habits more successfully, it is necessary to know to which sin we must direct our attention first: not to start battling from the sin which has its root in another unconquered sin, and to know the connection and the succession of the sins among themselves.

## 51. Priorities in battling sins

1. There is a connection and sequence of sins, according which one sin leads to others or interferes with liberation from them.
2. A person cannot get rid of any sins for as long as he falls into the sin of intoxication; he cannot free himself from the sin of ambition if he yields to that of greed; and cannot be freed from the sin of greed while he yields to the sin of idleness; he cannot be freed from sexual sin if he falls into the sin of lust and idleness; and he cannot be freed from the sin of ambition and greed so long as he yields to the sin of lust.
3. This does not mean that one should not strive against every sin at all times, but it means that for the success in battling sins it is necessary to know with which one to begin, or rather with which should not begin to make the battle successful.
4. It is only the battling sins in the wrong order that makes this battle unsuccessful and often leads the person battling sins into despair.
5. The sin indulging which makes conquering any other sin impossible is the sin of intoxication, any of it, whether it is by the means of stupefying substances, impressive surroundings, or fast vigorous movements; the intoxicated person can conquer neither laziness, nor lust, nor sexual propensities, nor lust for power. And therefore, to be able to fight other sins, a person must first free himself from the sin of intoxication.
6. The next sin from which a person must free himself in order to be able to battle with sensual lust, greed, ambition, sexual lust is the sin of idleness. The freer a person is from the sin of idleness, the easier it is for him to abstain from the sin of sensual lust, greed, ambition, sexual lust, and the lust for power: the person who works does not need more complex means of fulfilling his needs, does not indulge in possessions, is less eager to fall into the temptation of sexual lust, and has neither motives nor leisure time to fight.

7. The next after this is the sin of lust. The more abstemious a person is in food, clothing, housing, the easier it is for him to be free from the sin of greed, the lust for power, sexual lust. Satisfied with little, he does not need possessions, abstinence helps with conquering sexual lust, and, having little needs, he has no reasons to fight.

8. The next after these sins is the sin of greed. The freer will a person be from this sin, the easier it will be for him to refrain from the sin of sexual lust and the sin of fighting. Nothing encourages the sin of sexual lust as the superfluity of property, and nothing causes so much fighting among people.

9. Following after this, and the last one, is the sin of fighting, included in all sins, and is caused by all other sins, and the greatest liberation from which is only possible upon liberation from all the preceding sins.

## 52. How to battle sins

1. It is only possible to combat sins in general by knowing the sequence of sins, by starting to fight, first of all, those without which we cannot fight the others.
2. But even in the fight against every single sin, one should start with those manifestations of sins refraining from which is in the power of the person, of which the person has not made the habit yet.
3. Such sins, among all kind of sins – of drunkenness, and idleness, and sensual lust, and greed, and power, and sexual lust - are the personal sins, the ones that a person makes for the first time, and have not yet made habits of them. And therefore, the person must free himself, first of all, from them.
4. Only having freed himself from these sins, i.e. having ceased to invent new means of increasing his personal pleasures, should the person start combating with habits, traditions, established in his environment sins.
5. And only after overcoming these sins, can a person begin to battle the sins which are innate.

## 53. Battling the sin of intoxication

1. The purpose of a human life is the manifestation and increase of love. This increase occurs only after the person realizes his true divine self. The stronger his awareness of his true self, the greater is his well-being. And therefore anything that opposes this awareness, as any excitement does by increasing the false perception of his isolated life and weakens the consciousness of the true self (which any intoxication does), impedes the true well-being of a human.

2. But, in addition to the fact that any type of intoxication obstructs the true well-being of a person awakened to consciousness, any intoxication deceives the person and not only does not lead to increase of his individual well-being, which he seeks through the stimulation, but always deprives him from even the animal pleasures that he had.

3. A person who is still at the level of animal life, or a child with not yet awoken consciousness, indulging in any arousal - smoking, drinking, solemnity, dancing, - gets full satisfaction from the produced arousal and does not need the repetition of this arousal. But a person with awakened reason notices that any excitement suppresses the activity of his reason and removes the pain caused by contradiction between the demands of his animal and spiritual nature, and therefore he requires repetition and reinforcement of the intoxication, and requires more and even more of that, to completely quiet down that awakened reason in him, which is only possible to do by destroying completely, or at least partly, the bodily life. So a reasonable person, by getting indulged in this sin, not only does not receive the expected benefits, but falls into the most varied and cruel disasters.

4. A person who is free from intoxication uses for his bodily life all the powers of his mind that are given to him, and can reasonably choose what is best for the well-being of his animal existence, but a person indulging in intoxication loses even those mental powers which are given to an animal to avoid harm and receive pleasure.

5. Those are the consequences of the sin of intoxication for a person committing it; but for others the consequences of it are particularly harmful, firstly, because producing the effect of intoxication requires huge expenditure of efforts, so that a large share of labor of mankind is spent on the production of intoxicating substances and on the preparation and building of intoxicating ceremonial actions, processions, services, monuments, temples, all sorts of celebrations; secondly, because smoking, wine, exhilarating movements, and especially solemnity make thoughtless people under their influence to commit the most absurd, coarse, detrimental, and mean acts. This is what the person undergoing the temptation of any intoxication needs to know and always to keep in mind.

6. No one, while living in the body, can completely destroy in himself the possibility of raising of temporary intoxication from eating, drinking, or special environmental conditions, or exhilarating movements, and, as a result of these factors, the increase of animal perception and weakening of consciousness. But while a person cannot completely destroy this capability of arousal, everyone can bring it down to the lesser extent. And this is the essence of the upcoming battle of any person with the sin of intoxication.

7. In order to free himself from the sin of intoxication, a person must understand and remember that certain degree of excitement in certain times and under certain conditions is natural to a human as an animal, and that when his consciousness awakens, he should not only not look for these excitements, but try to avoid them and look for a more peaceful state, in which the activity of his mind can manifest itself in all its power, that activity, following which makes it possible to achieve the greatest well-being, both for himself as well as for people and creatures connected with him.

8. In order to achieve this state, a person must start with not growing in himself that sin of intoxication to which he is accustomed and which has become the habit of his life. If he has already included into his customary life certain habits of intoxication, repeated at certain times and recognized by all around him as necessary, let him keep these habits, but not to introduce new ones by imitating others or by inventing them himself: if he got used to smoking cigarettes, let him not get used to cigars or opium; if he got used to



beer or wine, let him not get used to stronger intoxicants; if got used to doing low bows during prayers at home or in church, or to jumping and dancing during worship, let him not get used to new actions. If he got used to celebrate some holidays, let him not celebrate new. Let him not to increase those means of arousal to which he got used to, and he will have already done a lot for freeing himself and others from the sin of intoxication. If only people would not introduce new forms of sin, sin would vanish, because sin begins when there is no habit and it is easy to defeat it, and there are always have been, are, and will be people who freed themselves from sin.

9. If the person has already firmly acknowledged the insanity of the sin of drunkenness, and firmly decided not to increase those habits of intoxication which became habitual to him, let him quit smoking, drinking, if he has those habits; let him cease to participate in the festivities and celebrations in which he participated; let him stop doing the exhilarating movements, if he is accustomed to do them.

10. If the person frees himself from those artificial habits of intoxication, in which he has been living, let him begin to free himself from those states of arousal which certain food, drink, movements, and environment produce in him, which any human is prone to.

11. Although a human, while in the body, will never completely escape the condition of arousal and intoxication produced by food, drink, movements, and surroundings - the degree of these conditions can be reduced to minimum. And the more the person, awakened to consciousness, will free himself of the condition of intoxication, the clearer will be his mind, the easier it will be for him to deal with all the other sins, the more he will receive the true well-being; and the more physical well-being will be added to him, the more he will be contributing to the well-being of other people.

## 54. Battling with the sin of idleness

1. A person with awakened consciousness is not an independent, self-satisfying creature that would be capable of having his own independent welfare, but a messenger of God, for whom well-being is only possible to the extent that he fulfills the will of God. And therefore for a human to serve his individual being is as unreasonable as it is unwise for an employee to serve his instrument of work, preserve his shovel or scythe, rather than to use it for intended work; as it is said in the Gospel: "who preserves his carnal life will lose his true life; and only by spending one's carnal life you can obtain the true life".

2. To force other people to work to satisfy one's own needs is as unreasonable as an unwise employee would destroy or spoil instruments of work of his co-workers in order to preserve or improve his own instrument which he must use to produce the work to which both he and his fellows are assigned.

3. But, in addition to the true well-being from which the person who frees himself from labor and dumps it on other people deprives himself, such a person also deprives himself of that bodily animal pleasures, which are intended for a human who does the normal physical work necessary for the satisfaction of his needs.

4. A person will get the greatest benefits for his separate being by exercising his strengths and rest, when he lives according to his instincts like an animal, working and resting just as much as it is required for his animal life. But as soon as he artificially dumps his work on others and arranges for himself artificial rest, he will not get pleasure from the rest.

5. The working person gets true satisfaction from rest; the idle person, instead of rest which he wants to arrange for himself, experiences constant uneasiness; and, in addition to that, this artificial idleness kills the source of his pleasure – his health, so that, by relaxing his own body, he deprives himself of the opportunity to work, and hence of the aftereffects of work – of

true rest, and causes in himself severe diseases.

6. Those are the consequences of idleness for the person committing this sin; for other people the consequences of that sin are detrimental, 1) because, as the Chinese saying says, if there is one person who does not work, then there's another one dying of hunger; 2) because the thoughtless people, having not experienced that frustration which idle people have, try to imitate them, and, instead of good feelings toward them, they experience envious, unkind feelings. This is what every person wanting to battle the sin of idleness should know.

7. In order to get rid of the sin of idleness, a person must clearly understand and remember that every time he liberates himself from work that he used to do, he does not increase but reduces the well-being of his separate personality and produces unnecessary evil toward other people.

8. It is impossible to destroy in a separate human animal being the desire for rest and an aversion to work (according to the Bible, idleness was bliss, and work was punishment), but to reduce this sin and to bring it to the lowest degree is something that a human must strive for, in order to rid himself of this sin.

9. To rid himself from the habit of sin, a person should start from not avoiding any labor that he performed before: if he used to clean his dress, washed the linen, he should not dump it on somebody else; if he managed to live without some things, products of labor of other people, - he should not buy them; if he used to go about on foot, he should not ride; if he used to carry his own suitcase, he should not give it to porter etc. All of it may seem so insignificant, but if people avoided doing that, they would get rid of a large number of their own sins and misery resulting from them.

10. Only when a person is able to refrain from liberating himself from the work he used to perform earlier and from dumping it onto other people, he can successfully start battling the hereditary sin of idleness. If he is a peasant, then he should not force his feeble wife to do what he has leisure to do himself, not to hire an employee as he did before, not to buy the product of

labor which he used to purchase and without which others manage to get around; if he is rich – to dismiss the servant and tidy up his things by himself, and not to buy expensive dresses if he used to do that before.

11. If a person has managed to conquer idleness he accustomed to from childhood, and descended to the working level at which people around him live, only then can this person begin to successfully combat the innate sin of idleness, i.e. work for the well-being of other people when others rest.

12. The fact that human life became so complicated as a result of the division of labor that a person cannot satisfy his own and his family's needs all by himself, and that it became now impossible in our world to avoid using the products of someone else's labor, still, this cannot prevent a person from striving toward the condition where he would give people more than he takes from them.

13. In order to ensure that, the person must, firstly, perform for himself and for his family all he can get done; and, secondly, while serving other people, choose not the work he likes and which many people want to do, as it comes to everything related to managing people, lecturing, entertaining them; but those works that are routinely needed, unattractive, and from doing which all people refuse, as with any kind of tough and dirty work.

## 55. Battling with the sin of sensual lust

1. The purpose of a human is to serve God by increasing love in himself. The less needs the person will have, the easier it will be for him to serve God and people, and therefore the more true benefits he will receive through the increase of love in himself.

2. But in addition to the benefits of true life, which a human receives in proportion to the degree of his freedom from the sin of lust, his condition in the world is such that if he gives in to his needs only to the extent that is necessary, and does not direct his mind to the increase of the pleasures of satisfying his needs, then this satisfaction gives him the greatest well-being attainable in this regard. But with each increase of his needs, whether they are satisfied or not, the welfare of worldly life inevitably diminishes.

3. The greatest benefit from satisfaction of his needs – in food, drink, sleep, clothing, shelter – a person receives when he satisfies them like an animal, instinctively, and not to get pleasure but in order to eliminate the growing dissatisfaction: the greatest pleasure from food a human gets not when he eats refined foods but when he is hungry, and from clothing - not when it is very beautiful but when he is cold, and from home - not when it is luxurious but when he takes refuge in it from the weather.

4. A person who uses rich dinner, clothes, or home exceeding his needs receives less pleasures than a person who uses the simplest food, clothing, home but after he gets hungry, cold, wet; so complicating the means of satisfying needs and their abundance do not increase the well-being of a personal life but reduces it.

5. Excess in satisfying needs deprives a person from the most source of the pleasure in satisfying needs: it destroys the health of the organism; no food brings pleasure to the patient with weakened stomach, no clothes and no home can warm up bloodless delicate bodies.

6. Those are the consequences of the sin of sensual lust for the person

committing them; for people surrounding him its impacts are that, firstly, people in need are deprived of those goods which are consumed by the ones who are in luxury; secondly, all those cowardly people, who see the excesses of the extravagant ones yet do not see their sufferings, lured by their status and are tempted by the same sin, and, instead of experiencing natural joyful brotherly feelings toward all, they experience painful jealousy and dislike toward the extravagant ones. That is what a person must know in order to successfully combat the sin of sensual lust.

7. It is impossible to eliminate the desire to increase pleasure of satisfying needs in a separate human being while he lives in the body, but a person can bring this desire down to minimum, and this the essence of battling the sin.

8. For the greatest liberation from the sin of lust, a person must first clearly understand and remember that any sophistication in satisfying one's own needs will not only increase but reduce his well-being and produce unnecessary evil in other people.

9. To free himself from the habits of this sin, a person should start with the decision not to increase his own needs, not to change what he was accustomed to, not to imitate and not to invent new wants; not to start drinking tea when he lived and was healthy without tea; not to build new palace when he lived in the old one. This refraining may seem so little, but if only people would just refrain from doing that, 90 percent of human sins and sufferings would have disappear.

10. Only by firmly refraining from introducing new luxuries in his life can a person begin to battle the inherited sins; a person who is used to drink tea and eat meat, or a person accustomed to the champagne and fine horses, little by little, can unlearn that what is superfluous, and transition from more luxurious habits to more frugal ones.

11. And, only by having unlearned the luxury habits and descended down to the degree of the poorest people, can the person begin to deal with the innate sins of sensual lust, i.e. reduce his needs to the level even with the most poor and moderate people.

## 56. Battling with the sin of greed

1. The true well-being of a human is in the manifestation of love, and at the same time a human is put in a position that he never knows when he will die, and so every hour of his life can be the last one; and so no one reasonable person can violate love in the present for the sake of providing for the future, which may never come. But this is exactly what most people do by trying to acquire possessions and to keep them away from other people, to secure the future for themselves and their families.

2. But, in addition to the fact that people, by doing so, deprive themselves of true well-being, they do not attain even those benefits for their separate being that are always accessible to a human.

3. It is in human nature to satisfy his needs by his own labor, and even to store objects for his needs as some animals do, and, by doing so, a human attains the highest possible well-being for his separate being.

4. But as soon as the person starts to claim exclusive rights to those stored or otherwise acquired articles, the well-being of his individual does not only decrease, but is being replaced by the suffering of this being.

5. The person who relies, in ensuring of his future, on his own work, on the mutual assistance of people, and, most importantly, on such arrangement in the world in which people are just as provided in their life as celestial birds or wild flowers are, he can peacefully give in to all the joys of life; but the person who started securing his own future property, cannot have a moment of peace.

6. First of all, a human never knows for how long he will need to provide for himself: for one month, one year, ten years, for the next generation; secondly, the cares about his property distract him more and more from simple joys in life; thirdly, he is always afraid of possibility that those possessions can be captured by other people, and always struggles to keep and increase the goods he has acquired, and, by giving his whole life to taking care of the

future, he loses his real life.

7. Those are the consequences of the sin of property for the person committing it; and for the people around him its effects are: deprivations as a result of the seizures.

8. It is almost impossible to eliminate in oneself the desire to retain exclusively for oneself the essential items - clothing, tools, a piece of bread for tomorrow; but to bring this inclination to a minimum is possible, and in this bringing the sin of property down to the lowest degree is the essence of battling this sin.

9. And therefore, in order to free himself of the sin of property, an individual should clearly understand and remember that the ensuring of his future by acquisition and retention of possessions will not increase his well-being but will diminish it, and will cause great unnecessary evil to those people among whom these possessions are acquired and withheld.

10. And in order to deal with the habit of this sin, you need to begin with not increasing the assets you have in an attempt of ensuring future, whether it be millions of pounds or dozens of bags of rye for a year's consumption. If only people understood that their well-being and life, even animal life, is not secured by possessions, they would not increase at the expense of others that what everyone considers his own, and then a big part of the disasters that afflict humans would disappear.

11. Only when a person is already able to refrain from increasing his property, can he successfully start freeing himself from what he owns, and, only having freed himself from everything inherited, can he begin to battle the inborn sin, i.e. to give others what is considered necessary for the support of life itself.



## 57. Battling with the sin of lust for power

1. "Kings reign over the nations and exercise their authorities over them, but not what it shall be among you, - who wants to be first, he shall be the servant to all," the Christian teaching says. According to the Christian teaching, a human is sent to the world in order to serve God; and serving God is fulfilled by manifesting love. And love can only be manifested through serving people, and therefore every struggle of a person, awakened to conscious awareness, with other beings, i.e. violence, the desire to make another person commit an act contrary to his own will, is opposite to human purpose and obstructs his true well-being.

2. But, in addition to the fact that the person, awakened to conscious awareness and coming to grips with other beings, deprives himself of the benefits of true life, he does not even reach those benefits for his single being which he aspires to.

3. A human, living only animal life, like a child or an animal, fights with other creatures only for as long as his animal instincts require this struggle: robs a piece from another only when he is hungry, and drives the other one away from his place only when he has no place, applies only physical strength for this fight, and, after defeating or being defeated in the fight, stops it. And, in doing so, he gets the highest welfare which is available for him as a single being.

4. But that is not what happens to a person with awakened reason, coming into the fight: the person with awakened reason, coming into the fight, uses for it all his mind and makes fighting his purpose, and therefore he never knows when he will stop it, and after his victory, he gets carried away by the desire for further victories, triggering hate in the defeated, which poisons his life if he is the winner; or if he gets defeated, he suffers himself from humiliation and hatred. So a Homo sapiens, by entering a fight against other creatures, not only does not increase the benefits of his individual being, but reduces it by the sufferings he has himself produced.

5. A person who avoids fighting, who is submissive, firstly, is free and can put his efforts into what attracts him, secondly, by loving others and humbling himself before them, causes love in them and therefore can enjoy those benefits of worldly life which he encounters; but a person with awakened reason who enters a fight inevitably gives already his whole life to the efforts to fight, and, secondly, by fighting, he causes fighting back and hatred in other people, and cannot peacefully enjoy those benefits he won by the fight, so he has to protect them nonstop.

6. These are the consequences of the sin of fighting for the person committing it; for those around him the consequences of the sin are in all kinds of sufferings, deprivations, experienced by the defeated, and most importantly, in the feeling of hatred that they cause in people instead of natural loving brotherly feeling.

7. Although a human will never, while he lives, free himself from the conditions of contention, but the more he succeeds in liberating himself from them according to his powers, the more true well-being he attains, the more earthly well-being will follow him, and the more he will contribute to the good of the world.

8. And therefore, in order to get rid of the sin of fighting, a human must clearly understand and remember that his true spiritual as well as temporal animal well-being will be the more abundant the less he will fight with people and all other creatures; and the more submissive and humble he will be, the more he will develop a habit of turning the other cheek to whoever hits him, and of giving his coat to whoever takes his shirt.

9. In order not to fall into the habit of sin, a person should start with not increasing in himself that sin of fight in which he lives: if a person is already in a fight with animals or human beings to the degree that all his life is supported by this fight, then let him continue this fight without increasing it, but let him not enter into the fight against other creatures, and he will have already done a lot to rid himself of the sin of fight. If only people would not increase their fight, fighting would be further and further eliminated, because there are always people who further and further refrain from fighting.

10. If a person has attained that level of living without increasing of fighting with those around him, then let him work to reduce, weaken the condition of inherited fight in which every person coming into life lives.

11. If the person will be able to free himself from the fight in which he grew up, let him then endeavor to free himself from that tendency to strive innate in every person.

## 58. Battling with the sin of sexual lust

1. The purpose of a human is to serve God through the manifestation of love to all creatures and people; but a human who yields to the lust of love weakens his strengths and distracts himself from serving God and therefore, by indulging in sexual lust, deprives himself of the well-being of true life.
2. But, in addition to the fact that a person who yields to sexual lust in any form deprives himself of true well-being, he does not even obtain the benefits he is looking for.
3. When a person lives in a faithful marriage, engages in sexual intercourse only when there can be children, and responsibly raises children, inevitable result for the mother becomes sufferings and cares, for the father - cares about the mother and child, and mutual - cooling of affection and frequent quarrels between spouses, and between parents and children.
4. But when a person enters into sexual intercourse not with the goal of having and upbringing children, avoids having them, and when he, having children, does not take care of them, and changes the objects of his love, then the attainment of his individual well-being becomes less possible, and the person inevitably undergoes sufferings, the more brutal the more he yields to the sexual passion: resulting in the weakness of his physical and spiritual powers, in quarrels, and in illnesses. And there is no consolation that spouses living in the rightful marriage have – of family, all its help and joy.
5. Those are the consequences of the sin of sexual lust for the committing it; for other people they are in the following; firstly, the person with whom the sin is committed bears the same consequences of the sin: the loss of both true and temporary well-being, and the same suffering and illnesses; to the rest they are: in the destruction of children in the bud, infanticide, abandonment of children without care and education, and the terrifying evil destroying human souls - prostitution.
6. No one living creature can eliminate in himself the desire for sex,

including human, except in rare cases. It cannot be otherwise, since this sexual lust is responsible for the existence of the human race, and therefore, while the Higher Will needs the existence of the human race, lechery will take place in it.

7. But the sexual lust can be reduced to the lowest extent, and some people can bring it to a complete chastity. And in this reduction and bringing it to the lowest degree, and even to chastity for some people, as it is said in the Gospel, is the essence of battling with the sin of sexual lust.

8. And therefore, in order to get rid of the sin of sexual lust, a person must understand and remember that sex is the necessary condition of life of any animal and human as animal, but the awakened consciousness aroused in the human requires from him the opposite, i.e. complete abstinence, total celibacy, and the more he will indulge in sex, the less he will receive not only true but also temporary animal well-being and the more he will bring suffering to himself and to other people.

9. And, in order to combat the habit of sin, a person should start with not increasing in himself that sin of sexual lust in which he is now. If the person is chaste, let him not violate his chastity; if he is married, let he remains faithful to his spouse; if he has intercourse with many, let he continues to live that way but not to invent unnatural sexual practices. Let he do not change his condition and do not increase his sin of sexual lust. If only people did that, their sufferings would end.

10. If the person has succeeded in refraining from new sins, then let him work to reduce that sin of sexual lust in which he abides now: let the chaste person in practice battle with his mental sin of sexual lust, let the married one strive to reduce and regulate his sexual interaction. Let the one who knows many women, and a woman who knows many men become faithful to their chosen partners.

11. And if the person is able to free himself from those habits of sexual lust in which he currently abides, then let him strive to break free from those inborn tendency to sexual lust with which each human is born.

12. Although only rare people can be completely chaste, let each person understand and remember that he can always be more chaste than he was before, and can return to the chastity he has violated, and, according to his strengths, the more he will be able to reach the complete chastity, the more he will attain the true well-being, and the more earthly welfare will follow him, and the more he will contribute to the well-being of people.

## Part 7. Special means of battling sins

## 59. Special means of battling sins

1. In order to not to fall into deception, you must trust no one and nothing but only your reason; in order not to fall into temptation, you must not justify the actions that are contrary to truth, to life; in order not to fall into sin, you should clearly recognize that sin is an evil and deprives human of not only his true well-being, but also of his personal well-being and produces evil in people; and, moreover, you need to know the consecutive order in which you need to combat sins.

2. But people know that and still fall into sins. This happens because people don't know clear enough who they really are, what constitutes their true "self", or forget about it.

3. And in order to get to know yourself more and more, clearer and clearer, and to be mindful of who you are, there is one powerful tool. And this tool is prayer.



## 60. The prayer

1. Since ancient times, it was recognized that a human needs prayer.
2. Prayer was, for people of old times and remains for many people now, an appeal - in certain situations, in certain places, in certain actions and words – to God or gods with the purpose of appeasing them.
3. Christian teaching does not recognize such prayers, but teaches that prayer is essential, not for the deliverance from worldly disasters or the acquisition of worldly goods, but for strengthening the person in his battle against sins.
4. To combat sins, a person needs to understand and remember his position in the universe; and, upon taking every action, he needs to assess it in order not to fall into sin. In both cases, the person needs prayer.
5. And therefore there are two applications of the Christian prayer: the one that clarifies the person's position in the universe is the occasional prayer; and another, which accompanies each of his action, brings it to God's judgement, takes it through the test, is the continual prayer.

## 61. Occasional prayer

1. Occasional prayer is the prayer by means of which a person, in his best moments, abstracts himself from all worldly influences, and evokes in himself the clearest consciousness of God and his attitude toward him.
2. This is the prayer that Christ says in Matthew chapter 6; in contrast to wordy and public prayers of the Pharisees, which he brings up as an example of how not to pray, Christ calls solitude being an essential condition for it.
3. The "Our Father" prayer, as well as Christ's prayer in Gethsemane garden, show us how to pray and what that true occasional prayer should be, which, by clarifying the human consciousness about the truth of one's life, about his attitude toward God, and his purpose in the world, increases his spiritual strengths.
4. Such a prayer may be an expression in your own words of your attitude toward God; but such a prayer was expressed, and always will be for all people, as a repetition of statements and thoughts of people who lived before us and who had voiced their attitude toward God, and as spiritual unity with these people and with God. Christ prayed that way, by repeating the words of the Psalm; and we are truly praying when we repeat the words of Christ, and not only of Christ, but of Socrates, Buddha, Lao Tse, Pascal and others, when we experience that spiritual state which these people have experienced and expressed in those statements that have reached us.
5. And therefore the true occasional prayer will be not the one that requires certain hours and days, but only that which we use in the moments of our highest spiritual state, such moments that come to every human being, which are sometimes caused by suffering or by the proximity of death, sometimes come without any external motive, moments that the person must cherish as highest treasure and use them to greater and greater clarification of his own consciousness, because it is only in these moments that our movement forward and closer to God is accomplished.

6. Such prayer may not be committed in meetings, nor accompanied by external influences, but requires complete solitude, conditions free from external, distracting effects.

7. This prayer is the prayer that shifts the person from the lower state of life to his higher state: from animal to human, from human to God.

8. It is only through this prayer the person gets to know himself, his divine nature, and feels those limits that confine his divine nature, and, feeling them, strives to break them, and by this desire expands them.

9. This is the prayer that, by clarifying his consciousness, makes sins, in which the person lived before, impossible for him, and reveals to him as sin that which didn't seem sinful to him before.

## 62. Continual prayer

1. In his progression from animal life to true and spiritual life, in his birth to new life, in his battle with sin, every person is always at sin in three different ways. Some sins he has already overcome. They are like chained beasts, which only from time to time, by growling, remind of themselves that they are still alive. These sins are left behind.

Other sins are those that the person has just noticed; such are the deeds that he was doing all his life, not seeing them as sins, the sinfulness of which he has just realized after clarifying his consciousness through the occasional prayer. The person sees the sinfulness of these acts, but he is so used to do them; he has, so recently and not so clearly, seen the sinfulness of those acts that he does not try to fight them yet.

And there is a third kind of actions sinfulness of which the person clearly sees, which he already fights, and which he sometimes commits, yields to sin, and sometimes does not commit and thus defeats sin.

2. To combat these sins comes the continual prayer. This prayer serves to remind the person at all times of his life, during all his actions, of what his life and well-being is; and therefore in those acts of life in which the person is still able to conquer his animal nature by spiritual consciousness, this prayer helps him.

3. The continual prayer is the constant awareness of God's presence, i.e. constant, during his mission, realization by the envoy of the presence of the Sender.

4. The birth to the new life, liberating himself from the bonds of the animal nature, freeing himself from the sin is achieved by only slow efforts. Occasional prayer, through illuminating the human consciousness, opens his sin to him. At first this sin seems unimportant to him, acceptable, but the longer the person lives the more persistent becomes the need to free himself from sin. And if only the person does not fall into temptation covering sin, he

inevitably comes to grips with sin.

5. But from the first attempts to overcome sin, the person feels powerless: sin attracts to itself by all the weakness of the habits of sin; and nothing the person can use to counter sin except his realization that to sin is wrong, and the person, while knowing that what he is doing is bad, continues to do this wrong deed.

6. There is only one way out of this situation. Some religious teachers see it in a special force known as grace, which supports the person in his struggle with sin and is acquired through certain performances called sacraments. Other teachers see solution from this situation in faith in redemption accomplished for people by Christ the God. Still others see solution in prayer to God for strengthening the person's powers in his fight against sin.

7. But neither first nor second or third way makes the person's fight against sin easier. Despite of the bliss of sacraments, the faith in the atonement, or the pleading prayer, each person, who sincerely began battling sin, cannot but feel all his weakness before the power of sin and the hopelessness of fighting it.

8. The hopelessness of this struggle looks overpowering especially because the person, once he understood the deceptiveness of sin, wants to get rid of it immediately, to which he is encouraged by various false teachings - about sacraments, redemption, etc., and, after feeling powerless to free himself, he right away disregards those little efforts which he could make to free himself from sin.

9. And meanwhile, just as all great upheavals in the material world happen not suddenly but through slow and gradual shedding or growth, in spiritual world the liberation from sin and advance toward perfection is accomplished only by slow resistance to sin – by eliminating the smallest pieces of it, one after another.

10. It is not in human power to get rid of the sin that grew into a habit over the course of many years, but it is totally in his power not to do acts which involve him in the sin, to reduce the attractiveness of the sin, to set himself

into the impossibility of committing the sin, “to cut off the hand and pluck out the eye that seduce him”. And to do it every day and every moment; and for him to be able to do this, he needs the continual prayer.

## 63. What can a person living the Christian life expect in the present?

1. There are religious teachings that promise people following them total and perfect well-being, not only in the future, but in this life. There is even such understanding of the Christian teaching. People who understand Christian teaching this way say that you only need to follow the teaching of Christ: deny yourself and love people, and your life will be incessant joy. Other religious teachings look at life as endless and necessary sufferings that a person must endure, hoping for the rewards in his future life. And there is similar understanding of the Christian teaching: some people see life as continual joy, others – as continual sufferings.

2. Neither of these understandings is correct. Life is neither joy nor suffering. Life may appear to be joy or suffering only to the person who regards his “self” as a separate being; only for this separate “self” can there be joy or suffering. But life, according to the Christian teaching in its true sense, is neither joy nor suffering but the birth and growth of the true spiritual “self” of the person, in which can neither be joy nor pain.

3. According to the Christian teaching, human life is the constant growth of consciousness of love. And because the growth of human soul – the increase of love – is in constant process, so is the work of God, which is accomplished by this growth, in constant process in the world, and so the person who understands his life the way that the Christian teaching instructs - as the growth of love for the establishment of the Kingdom of God – he can never be unhappy or unsatisfied.

4. On the path of his life, there may be joy and suffering for his animal personality, which the person can't not to feel, can't not to rejoice at and can't not to suffer from, but he never can feel the complete happiness (and therefore he may not long for it), and he can never be unhappy (and therefore cannot be afraid of sufferings and cannot desire to avoid them if they stand in his way).

5. A person living the Christian life, does not attribute much value to his joys, does not see them as the fulfillment of his desires but only as accidentally occurring on his life journey phenomena and sees them as something that by itself accompanies the one who seeks the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and he regards his sufferings not as something that should not happen, but, on the contrary, as equally necessary in the life phenomenon as friction at work, knowing that as friction is a sign of the ongoing work, so as suffering is the sign of the produced work of God.

6. A person living the Christian life is always free, because the very same that constitutes the meaning of his life – the removal of obstacles obstructing love, and, as a consequence of that, the growth of love and the establishment of the Kingdom of God, - is the same what he always wants and what inevitably takes place in his life; he is always calm because nothing can happen to him that he does not want.

7. You do not need to think that a person living the Christian life always experiences such freedom and peace of mind, that he always receives joys as something accidental, without getting excited about them, does not want to retain them, and regards his sufferings as a necessary condition for the progression of the life. The Christian may temporarily get carried away by joys, trying to produce and retain them; he may be temporarily troubled by sufferings, regarding them as something needless which could be avoided, but when he loses joy, or when he is in fear or in the pain of suffering, the Christian immediately regains his Christian dignity, recalls his mission, and then both joys and sufferings take their proper meaning, and he again becomes free and calm.

8. So even from the worldly point of view, the position of the Christian is not worse but better than that of the non-Christian. "Seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all the rest will follow you" - means that all worldly pleasures are not closed from the Christian but quite available to him, with the only difference that whereas joys of the non-Christian may be artificial and transgress to satiety and sufferings, and therefore are regarded by him as unnecessary and hopeless, - for the Christian the same joys are more simple, natural, and, therefore, strong; they can never produce satiety or



sufferings, can neither be so painful nor appear so meaningless as they do to the non-Christian. This is the position of the Christian in the current life; but what can the Christian expect in the future?

## 64. What can a person expect in the future?

1. A person living in this world in his corporeal shell cannot imagine his life differently rather than in space and time, and therefore he naturally asks, where he will be after his death.
2. But this question is incorrect: the divine nature of our soul, spiritual, independent of time and space, in this life enclosed in the body, upon leaving this body, ceases to be limited by space and time, and therefore you cannot say about this entity that it will. It is. As Christ said: "Before Abraham was, I am". And so all of us. If we are, we have always been and will be. We are.
3. The same is in regards to the question about where we will be. When we say 'where', we talk about the place where we're going. But the notion of a place was derived only with the separation from the rest in which we have been placed. With our death this separation will disappear, and therefore for people living in this world we will be everywhere or nowhere. We will be that for which there is no place.
4. There are many different predictions about what and where will be after death; but all of them, from the roughest to the most sophisticated, cannot satisfy a reasonable person. Bliss, voluptuousness of Mohammad is too rough and obviously incompatible with true understanding of human and God. Similarly, incompatible with the concept of God of love is the ecclesiastical idea of heaven and hell. Reincarnation is less crude idea, but similarly holds on to the idea of separateness of an individual; the concept of Nirvana eliminates all the roughness of reincarnation, but violates the requirement of reason – the reasonableness of existence.
5. So neither idea about what will happen after death gives an answer that would satisfy a reasonable person.
6. And it could not be otherwise. The question is set incorrectly. Human mind, which is able to think only in terms of space and time, wants to give an answer to what will be outside of these conditions. Reason knows one thing:

that there is our divine essence, and that it grew in this world. And, having reached a certain stage of its growth, it has come out of these conditions.

7. Will this entity continue to function separately again? Will this increase of love cause a new division? All these are guesses, and there may be many of such guesses, but none of them can be credible.

8. One thing is certain and undoubted is what Christ said when he was dying: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit". Precisely that, when dying, I go back to where I came from. And if I believe that what I came from is reason and love (these two properties I know), then I am joyfully returning to it, knowing that I will be well. And not only I do not regret, but I am rejoiced over the transition that is ahead for me to make.